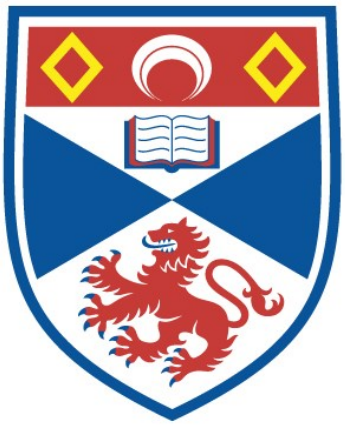
MADE FOR PERFORMANCE : STUDY OF THE MATURE POETRY OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Paul Whittington Culwick

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



1982

MADE FOR PERFORMANCE

A Study of

The Mature Poetry of

Gerard Manley Hopkins

by

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For my wife and my parents.

This thesis has been composed by me, and the work of which it is a record has been done by myself. It has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I have carried out research on the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins in the Department of English, University of St. Andrews, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the British Institute of Recorded Sound, under the supervision of Mr. G. E. R. Bradshaw. I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance General No. 12 in October 1980, and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil. on 19th January 1982.

I certify that Mr. Paul Whittington Culwick has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of University Court, 1980, No. 2 as amended and the regulations for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

G. E. R. Bradshaw
Supervisor.

ABSTRACT

This work is a study of the mature poetry and poetics of Gerard Manley Hopkins with particular reference to his own oft-stated view that his poetry was intended to be read aloud "with the ear" or to be performed.

The study begins by placing Hopkins historically with regard to the effects on the European mind of printing, the work of Peter Ramus, and the subjective-objective dilemma which particularly perturbed the Romantic poets. Attention is especially given to Hopkins's relation with the seventeenth century. The conclusion is that with respect to these historical influences he belongs in the main to traditions which existed in full force in the Middle Ages and the Elizabethan era, though in many obvious respects he has the concerns typical of his age. Hopkins's speculations on language are then examined and some consideration given to the way these influenced his poetics and poetry; further, Hopkins's theories of knowledge and Being, in which language has a significant place, is also examined in relation to his poetic theories. Thereafter consideration is given to the development of Hopkins's ideas on the nature of the art he was writing, the kind of performance he envisaged for his poems, and the relationships these discussions suggest exist between poet, work and different types of audience. Before the main section of the thesis some attention is given to the influences Hopkins came under throughout his life and which gave his art and the poetic theory underlying it their particular nature. The main section consists of a detailed examination of the mature poetry, with special regard to Hopkins's rhythms, syntax, and various kinds of "counterpoint" he used, and the sound-structures of his verse - stanzaic forms and the complicated patterns of sound drawn largely from Welsh poetry. The

aims of this part of the work are to describe how these features give the poems their dramatic character, to suggest ways in which the unusual nature of this poetry necessitates changes in our approach to it in terms of our critical assumptions, interpretation, and the kind of performance it requires, and to indicate how important these considerations are to any understanding or judgement of Hopkins's achievement. In the light of these discussions and the examination of the poems themselves, three major conclusions are reached. First, Hopkins's status as a major poet is felt to be justified in view of the achievement represented by Sprung Rhythm, his use of the sonnet form, his masterly poetic vision and craftsmanship, and many of the poems in a notably small canon, but in addition, these achievements embrace another, the fusion in his work of a number of vital, and in some cases opposed, traditions in English poetry - an achievement which makes him a particularly important poet in the development of poetry in English. In view of Hopkins's narrow range and lack of rich human sympathies, which are leading to qualifications of his work, this is a significant argument for his greatness. Secondly, his poems use a creative language of knowledge, comparable to our other ways of developing epistemologies such as science or logic, though it is more comprehensive in that it takes in the whole nature of man and the nature of its referents. And thirdly, the performance of Hopkins's poems is seen as the essential way by which the experience and knowledge offered by each is realised in the fullest and most vivid manner by the reader.

Preface

Like most writers, Hopkins's reputation has followed the vagaries of fashion, but he is now well established as a "classic", to use his own term, and he is a writer of enough importance and interest for it to be unlikely that he will ever be permanently eclipsed. However, he is at the same time a poet who is particularly difficult to judge, since his late publication made him in one sense a modern poet, and yet in other and more important ways he is very much a Victorian writer. The problem is that we do not have a comprehensive Victorian literary reaction to his poems, only a relatively modern one, with the result that from a literary point of view, he is in something of a contextual vacuum. This problem is likely to bear on any study of Hopkins, but it is felt in a particularly acute way throughout this one, which deals with one of the central tenets of Hopkins's poetic, namely that his poetry was, "as living art should be, made for performance". This neatly underlines Hopkins's paradoxical place in English poetry of the last hundred years, and it is surprising in view of the stress he placed on it that it has not been given more consideration in the past. Its prominent place in this study has inevitably meant that some aspects of the paradox have been explored, and although the paradox will always remain, it is possible to get round some of the problems it presents by understanding as well as we can what Hopkins's poetics were, why he thought and wrote as he did, and how these alter the appreciative response of his reader. These are matters which this study sets out to explore in some detail, and in the process to offer some different perspectives on the poet. I hope that as a result Hopkins will be both better understood and more fully enjoyed.

I owe a great deal to many people for help given me during the work on this thesis, and I would like to record my gratitude to them all. The completion of this project provides me with an opportunity to thank three people in particular who have not been directly connected with it, but to whom I owe more than I could possibly enumerate: Mr. Neville Nuttall, my English teacher at Hilton College, who took an already strong love of English and enriched it immeasurably; Dr. Paul Walters, my tutor, who also became a friend and mentor; and Professor Colin Gardner, who gave me much encouragement and help over many years. To the following people and organisations I would like to express my gratitude for the help they gave me with various aspects of this study: to the Editor of The Month for permission to use both published and unpublished material from the Hopkins MSS held at Campion Hall and Balliol College; to the Master of Campion Hall, Father Paul Edwards S. J. for allowing me to consult the MSS at Campion Hall, and to the Master and Fellows of Balliol College for allowing me to consult MS D II now held in the College Library; to the staff of the Duke Humphrey's Reading Room in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for their assistance when I consulted MSS B and H, and especially to Lord Bridges, who kindly gave me permission to consult MS A, now also deposited in the Bodleian Library; to the British Institute of Recorded Sound in London for allowing me to listen to the recordings of Hopkins's poems they hold, and particularly to Mr. Jonathan Vickers of the Institute, who gave me a great deal of assistance and of his time when he could little afford it; to my typists, Margo Sproson, Jackie Balfour and Anne Hughes, who put in a labour of love on my pencil draft and went far beyond the call of duty in getting the typing completed under pressure from deadlines; and to Mr. Tony Ellis of the Department of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, whose detailed criticisms of Chapter 3 enabled me to make substantial improvements to it; to Mr. George Jack of the Department of

English in the University, for looking over the first draft of Chapter 8 and making many helpful suggestions, and also for a fruitful discussion of English rhythms and the nature of stress in English; to Mr. Phillip Mallet, whose criticisms of the first draft of Part 1 cleared up many problems and also enabled me to make many improvements to various parts. To my supervisor, Mr. Graham Bradshaw, I owe more than most students do to their supervisors, since over and above his scrupulous and critical examination of many pencil drafts, and the many hours of stimulating discussion we had together, he gave me back what another time and place had taken away. The dedication records a debt it is difficult ever to express adequately, but I would like to say thank you through it for many years of encouragement, support and love.

Contents

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnoting:

Poems	-	The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Eds. W.H. Gardner & N.H. MacKenzie), London, O.U.P., 1970, (Fourth Edition).
LRB.	-	The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (Ed. C.C. Abbot), London, O.U.P., 1935.
CRWD.	-	The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and R.W. Dixon, (Ed. C.C. Abbot), London, U.O.P., 1935.
FL.	-	Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Ed. C.C. Abbot), London, O.U.P., 1956, (Second Edition).
JP.	-	The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Eds. Humphrey House & Graham Storey), London, O.U.P., 1959.
SDW.	-	The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Ed. C. Devlin S.J.) London, O.U.P., 1959.
Gardner Vol. 1	-	W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins Vol. 1, London, O.U.P., 1958.
Gardner Vol. 2	-	W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins Vol. 2, London, O.U.P., 1958.
Robinson	-	John Robinson, In Extremity, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1978.
Milroy	-	James Milroy, The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins, London, Andre Deutsch, 1977.
Hill	-	Geoffrey Hill, "Redeeming the Time", Agenda, Vol. $1\frac{1}{4}$, No. 4 - Vol. 11, No. 1, 1972/73.
PMLA.	-	Publications of the Modern Language Association.
TLS.	-	Times Literary Supplement.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> ... I do not think it has in a high degree a nameless quality which is of the first importance both in oratory and drama: I sometimes call it bidding. I mean the art or virtue of saying everything right to or at the hearer, interesting him, holding him in the attitude of correspondent or addressed or at least concerned, making it everywhere an act of intercourse - and of discarding everything that does not bid, does not tell.[1]

It would, I am sure, be agreed on all sides that the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins needs to be read aloud - but in most cases it is not simply a question of reading aloud: what is required is in the nature of a performance. There is no need to look far as to why this is so; the ever-present alliteration and assonance are in themselves an explanation, though as Part III will indicate there are other less obvious reasons for this poetry's appeal to the voice and the ear. But there are two related and more pertinent questions which to my knowledge have not been dealt with in any very extended or detailed way:[2] what motivated Hopkins to write, quite consciously, a poetry markedly different from that of his contemporaries? And why did he choose to write a poetry which would seem to be distinguished from most lyric poetry both by the great emphasis on the sounds of the language, and by its demand for a performance which is virtually impossible in practice

1. LRB. p. 160. The reference is to Bridges' verse play Prometheus.

2. One partial exception is James Milroy's The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins, though as Milroy's interests are much larger and in another area he does not give it a great deal of attention.

to meet, as Hopkins himself acknowledged?[1] In short, why did he write a poetry that belongs to a category, or genre, for which we have no ready definition? "Lyric" is not entirely suitable, and neither is "dramatic lyric" (though it is better), since the term has been used to describe other kinds of poetry,[2] and in any event, as Reuben Brower has pointed out, every poem is in an important sense dramatic:

> ... a poem is a dramatic fiction no less than a play, and its speaker, like a character in a play, is no less a creation of the words on the printed page. The 'person spoken to' is also a fictional personage and never the actual audience of 'you and me', and only in a special abstract sense is it the literary audience of a particular time and place in history. The voice we hear in a lyric, however piercingly real, is not Keats's or Shakespeare's; or, if it seems to be, as in
>
> the fancy cannot cheat so well
> As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf
>
> we are embarrassed and thrown off as if an actor had stopped and spoken to the audience in his own person.

1. "They are meant for, and cannot properly be taken in without, emphatic recitation; which nevertheless is not an easy performance". CRWD. p. 153. See also LRB. p. 265. Though the remark to Dixon concerns "Tom's Garland" and "Harry Ploughman", the problem was one which always worried Hopkins, as his anxiety about his diacritic marks and the proper reading of the poems shows, from The Wreck of the Deutschland on. See LRB. pp. 43, 45, CRWD. p. 15.

2. One obvious referent is the song or lyric sung in a play, of which there are many examples in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Another is defined by Robert Langbaum (The Poetry of Experience, London, Chatto and Windus, 1957, pp. 38-47) as a lyric in which the "I" is not strictly autobiographical but a persona derived from the autobiographical "I", and the poem is therefore a kind of dramatic projection.

> As Keats once remarked of men's lives, poems are 'continual allegories'; and if they have biographical meaning it is at least one remove from the actual men who wrote. For the poet is always wrapping himself up in some guise, if only the guise of being a poet.[1]

The passage quoted at the head of this chapter describes so accurately a characteristic of the poetry Hopkins wrote that it offers - or at least might at first appear to offer - some answers to the problems mentioned above; certainly an awareness that the poems are directed "right to or at the hearer" or reader, like a play, of their being "acts of intercourse", creates an unusual context for them and thereby gives them ambience and richness. But although the concept of bidding can help to explain why Hopkins's poems need to be read aloud, in its turn it presents a puzzling face. What in the poetry makes us feel that it is addressed "right to or at the hearer"? Why did Hopkins apparently make it so prominent a characteristic of his art? Is it really a distinguishing feature of his poetry and of oratory and drama, or does most poetry possess it, and have we passed it over without question, either because it was too obvious for comment or the issue had never been raised with sufficient seriousness? And furthermore, bidding might explain why a poem needs to be read aloud, but it does not go very far in explaining why a poem needs to be performed in the way Hopkins required, although it is obviously a part of that problem. Thus the concept of bidding itself needs some analysis and definition, though in view of the qualification just noted, we can at least say that it is a significant part of a larger, more pervasive, more important quality which I shall call,

1. The Fields of Light. New York, O.U.P., 1962. pp. 19 - 20.

for lack of a better term, the dramatic character; whatever can be discovered about "bidding" will contribute to an understanding of the larger issue.

The passage on bidding does help to explain why one tends almost instinctively to reach for a word like "dramatic" to describe Hopkins's verse; because of the close attention which the poems demand and the tense, urgent tone many of them have,the reader or hearer, as Hopkins says, is made a "correspondent" in an art of intercourse. However, the word "dramatic" is used in a wide variety of ways, and we need to clarify the use we make of it here. Drama, in the technical sense of the word, is "A composition in prose or verse, adapted to be acted upon a stage, in which a story is related by means of dialogue and action, and is represented with accompanying gesture, costume and scenery, as in real life; a play."[1] If drama is in essence an art in which actors represent life by means of words and action, then a dramatic art is an art of performance. This more literal use of the term must be clearly distinguished from analogical or metaphorical uses - as, for example, when we say that the dialogue of a novel is dramatic, or its three-part structure is dramatic because it is like a three-act play. In neither case does the criterion of performance strictly apply. Things like music, mime, oral poetry - and Hopkins's verse - are however dramatic in the proper sense of the word. In the case of Hopkins's verse though, its distinction is in its being at the same time intensely lyrical, and consequently it really belongs to a unique genre for which the term "dramatic lyric", in an extended and much enriched sense, is probably the best description available. The fact that these are lyric poems also means we must make an important qualification about their dramatic character: nearly all

1. Oxford English Dictionary.

the other dramatic arts (music is the exception and the rule here) are presented before a large audience and hence they have a public and popular character. Hopkins's poems on the other hand, because of their lyrical nature, belong to the private world of the solitary reader or of the intimate circle of poetry lovers. There are exceptions to this, including The Wreck of the Deutschland and the later experimental poems, about which I will say more later.[1]

Hopkins's poems therefore pose some interesting questions. What factors make his poetry dramatic, make it "bid"? What kind of performance do the poems require? Why did he develop his art along these lines? And in what ways are the answers to the first three questions important to an understanding of the poetry, and in developing general interpretive approaches to it? These questions are interwoven with one another, and an answer to one may also be an answer to another, so in offering some answers to them I have made no attempt to deal with them separately. The design of the thesis tends rather to answer them in different ways throughout its course, and so a word about the structure I have adopted is in order. Part I provides some historical and theoretical background, especially in chapters 2 and 4, while chapters 3 and 5 attempt to explain in some depth why Hopkins developed the kind of poetry briefly outlined here. Part II (chapter 6) is to the other chapters what a sketch is to a painting, and covers briefly those factors which played an important role in shaping the theory and giving it its particular character. In other words, where Part I tries to explain why it developed, and why it is important, Part II mainly considers how it developed. Part III is the heart of the thesis,

1. See chapters 4, 5, 10 and 11.

the section where the poetry occupies the centre of the stage and as a result it is nearly two-thirds of the total length. In it a number of poems are examined in considerable detail from several different angles, and out of these analyses come the most significant answers to the questions posed earlier, as well as some suggestions about ways of interpreting the poems. In the process, a fair amount emerges (rather obliquely) on various ways of reading or performing Hopkins aloud, and though I do not develop this to any great extent in the text, the comments will I hope be of some use in helping readers to read Hopkins more effectively, either to themselves or with others. For some brief remarks on a few commercial recordings available the reader may refer to Appendix A. Part IV brings the important ideas together and draws some conclusions, both about the problems which have been dealt with and about Hopkins in a more general way. The thesis has no pretensions to being comprehensive or of reaching final conclusions and I hope that in its small way it will contribute to the critical debate on Hopkins and to a more accurate assessment of his stature.

P A R T 1

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For in a state of intellectual activity no art is content to work out its materials completely or perfect its realism, but aims early at idealism. And one of the dangers to intellectual progress comes from the tendency to dwell on the first attained idealisms. Healthy art is always breaking from them, forming new ones, and then again advancing.

GMH, from an unpublished undergraduate essay,"On the rise of Greek prose writing", in MS DI, p. 13, held at Campion Hall.

CHAPTER 2

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

> My verse is less to be read than heard, as I have told you before; it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so.[1]

> Into the snows she sweeps,
> Hurling the haven behind,
> The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,
> For the infinite air is unkind,
> And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,
> Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;
> Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivellèd snow
> Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.[2]

Today, some sixty years after Hopkins's poems were first published, we are so familiar with them that we are in danger of forgetting how strange his poetry appeared to his contemporaries. The headache *The Wreck of the Deutschland* gave the sub-editor of *The Month* is an amusing reminder of the revolutionary nature of his verse,[3] but it was fairly characteristic of the uncomprehending response Hopkins was to meet on several later occasions,[4] and they all testify to the problems his contemporaries had in coping with a poetry so different from the norm. Some of the differences can be seen from a comparison of the stanza from the *Deutschland* above with the following extracts from Tennyson and Swinburne:

1. *LRB*. p. 46.
2. *Poems* 28, stanza 13.
3. See *JP*. p. 382.
4. See, for example, *LRB*. pp. 128, 191-192, *FL*. pp. 352-355.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
  For underfoot the herb was dry;
  And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
  Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;
  The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
  And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
  That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
  From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
  The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.[1]

Inside this northern summer's fold
The fields are full of naked gold,
Broadcast from heaven on lands it loves;
The green veiled air is full of doves;
Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let
Light on the small warm grasses wet
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,
And break again like waves that beat
Round the sun's feet.

1. In Memoriam, XCV, lines 1-16, Alfred Lord Tennyson Selected Poetry, (Ed. H. M. McLuhan) New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1956, p. 186.

But I, for all this English mirth
  Of golden-shod and dancing days,
And the old green-girt sweet-hearted earth,
  Desire what here no spells can raise.
Far hence, with holier heavens above,
The lovely city of my love
Bathes deep in the sun-satiate air
That flows round no fair thing more fair
Her beauty bare.[1]

There are several obvious similarities between these two extracts: the idealised, almost dreamy natural backdrop, the sensuousness which comes close to sentimentality in places, the lulling rhythms, long sentences, the occasional archaism ("kine" and "girt"), and a liking for inversions - "And on the board the fluttering urn" and

Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let
Light on the small warm grasses wet
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,

But what is more significant is the similarity in tone. This is partly the result of the similarities already noted, but over and above that there is a sense that both poets are writing in an accepted "poetical" way, that in addition to having certain scenes, and ways of writing about them, the poet must adopt a particular attitude towards his subject and his readers. The extracts I have given are too short to illustrate this point very well, but an extended comparison of the major and minor poets of the latter half of the nineteenth century shows how strongly a conventional poetic norm, or what Robert Bridges called a

1. "Siena", ll. 1-18, Songs Before Sunrise, London, Chatto and Windus, 1909, p. 191.

"continuous literary decorum",[1] dominated them. Hopkins's poetry, in contrast to the smoothness of the extracts I gave, their slightly withdrawn posture, and the gentle loveliness of the natural world, is muscular and assertive, with an unpredictable, vigorous movement; nature, far from being quiet, congenial, and fruitful, is charged with fierce, energetic motion and fearsome destructive power. The diction too is unusual. Prosaic terms like "Eastnortheast" and "quarter" sit close to remarkable compounds and coinages:

> Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivellèd snow
> Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.

To a nineteenth century critic, the rejection of conventional poetic diction in favour of inelegant coinages, or of words from common speech, would have seemed slightly barbarous, though a more sensitive reader like Bridges could have sensed that Hopkins's verse was the product of a most unusual and powerful poetic gift. His unusualness, by Victorian standards, can be defined in many ways, and I would like to pinpoint three which are central to my general argument.

The first is Hopkins's insistence that his poems be read aloud. It was an abiding concern, and one he felt strongly about, since he made the point many times to Bridges.[2] It is true that all but a little poetry (and that mainly twentieth century work) is written with half an ear or more on the way it sounds and moves, but we need to make a distinction of degree. Hopkins's verse is such that if it is to be fully appreciated and its nature fulfilled it can only be read aloud, whereas other

1. From the Preface to the First Edition of the poems. Quoted in Poems p. 239.

2. See Chapt. 4 for a discussion of the passages where Hopkins makes this point.

nineteenth century verse lends itself both to silent reading and to recitation. The reason for this is that although there is an acute awareness of rhythm and the sounds of words (especially perhaps in Swinburne), there is at the same time a smooth, even syntax and pace, a uniformity of tone which encourages silent reading, especially for a long poem like In Memoriam. The reasons for this we will be considering shortly.

Hopkins's second distinguishing feature (a logical development of the first) is that his poems, as we have them, must be considered a "record of speech",[1] to use Hopkins's own description of his verse, rather than as the record of a written language which can also be spoken aloud to good effect. The distinction is partly between a language which gives the impression of having the naturalness and spontaneity of speech, and one which is premeditated, and has the formal, even tone of written language. This is a distinction I will refine later on, but perhaps it needs to be said here that it is, I believe, rather less true of The Wreck of the Deutschland and a number of the earlier mature poems. In various ways, some of which will be discussed later, these early poems are closer to nineteenth century poetry than the later ones, in which Hopkins had developed his art even further away from contemporary norms.

The third point is that Hopkins's poetry has a power to bring his readers into close contact with himself (a result of its directness and individuality, which involves the reader as though he were personally addressed), and at the same time it conveys what it describes with a vivid physical immediacy. In much nineteenth century verse - Browning being the most notable exception - there is a greater distance both

1. LRB. p. 265.

between the poet and his audience (which suggests that many poets had a general, rather undefined audience in mind), and between the poet and his material, especially the natural world. This is not to say that there is no passion or skill in the way Tennyson and Swinburne describe, for example, a natural scene; there is much of both, but the difference is that they see and use nature from within a conventionalized perceptual framework, whereas Hopkins's notably unusual vision of the world, with its originality and spring-like freshness, reveals a man whose perceptions are accurate, vivid and intensely personal.[1] This distinction can be extended to other areas, but it is adequate for our purposes at the moment.

In view of Hopkins's somewhat anomalous position in the nineteenth century (though in some important respects he is very much a Victorian), it will be helpful if we place him and his contemporaries within the historical movements and traditions to which they belong. In the main I will argue that Hopkins belongs to a different and much older tradition than his contemporaries do, but that will only be with respect to the argument I am pursuing; in other ways he is very much post-Romantic and Victorian, and due emphasis must be placed there now to offset the apparent imbalance my discussion may convey. In particular I will be placing Hopkins in relation to the fundamental changes which took place in the English and European mind during the seventeenth century. T. S. Eliot's discussion of it (and his phrase "the dissociation of sensibility") is probably the best known, though it is also open to some

1. cf the following remarks by Hopkins on Swinburne: "Either in fact he /Swinburne/ does not see nature at all or else he overlays the landscape with such phantasmata, secondary images, and what-not of a delirium - tremendous imagination that the result is a kind of bloody broth: you know what I mean." (LRB. p. 202). Applied to the extract from Swinburne I quoted a little earlier these are pretty telling criticisms.

severe criticisms. But notwithstanding the criticism, many people, approaching the issue from very different positions, have felt that Eliot exposed a fundamental problem, though they differ as to its nature and causes. To give two brief examples: in The Living Principle F.R. Leavis speaks of "the great change manifested in the English language between Shakespeare and Dryden, which inevitably involves some reference to the decisive start of modern civilization in the seventeenth century"[1] and of "the Cartesian-Newtonian dualism"[2] (the problem of dualism will come up in this chapter too), while R. I. V. Hodge writes:

> the seventeenth was a decisive century for the development of English culture. Although Eliot's phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' is now unfashionable, most literary critics accept that major changes in forms of art and language occurred over this period, that went far deeper than the normal shifts in fashion from generation to generation: and a grasp of these deep processes is essential to an appreciation of the full significance of any poet.[3]

A change so fundamental and on such a scale involves a great many powerful influences, and a comprehensive examination would require detailed discussion of the influence of men like Descartes and Newton, Milton and Dryden, of the rise of science, and a host of other political, philosophical and economic factors. Because of the particular interest and scope of this thesis my purposes will be served if this important period and those before and after, and Hopkins's relation to them are examined in terms of three major factors: the development of print,

1. London, Chatto and Windus, 1975, p. 53.
2. ibid. p. 31.
3. Foreshortened Time, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1978, p. 2.

the work and influence of Peter Ramus, and the subjective-objective dualism which appeared in an early form in the seventeenth century and has troubled Western civilization ever since. What follows is more of a sketch than a detailed analysis, since there are many centuries to cover and there is only space for dealing with a few of the most important aspects.

The characteristics of Hopkins's poetry I have outlined so far are all the more remarkable for having appeared in an age of print and a fair degree of literacy; in some obvious respects his verse is reminiscent of oral poetry, but it is also unlike enough to pose the interesting problem of Hopkins's relation to the effects printing had on English. The matter is made more interesting because of the tyrannous influence print exerted in the two centuries before Hopkins, and one wonders how he managed, largely, to escape its influence.[1] Printing develops habits of reading, writing and thinking which are very different from those in a society which has only oral or written forms of language; indeed, the transition from a purely oral culture to a "mixed" one (in which the main means of communication is the spoken word, but in which there is also a written form of the language) is not anything like as revolutionary as the transition from a "mixed" culture to one in which printing has developed. A culture which has only written and spoken forms of the language remains primarily an oral one and will tend to reproduce in the written language the character of the spoken one, but printing develops what is in the end another form of the language, with a character very different from the spoken one. Discussing the effect of

1. cf. ".... printing, a technological triumph whose impact is constantly underestimated, one might say unrecognized, by the historians of ideas of this period [16th to 17th century]". J. H. Plumb, The Death of the Past, London, MacMillan, 1969, p. 93. See also p. 121.

printing on language in the sixteenth century, Marshall McLuhan has written:

> Individual writers throughout the 16th century varied tone sentence by sentence, even phrase by phrase, with all the oral freedom and flexibility of pre-print days. Not until the later 17th century did it become apparent that print called for a stylistic revolution. The speeding eye of the new reader favoured not shifting tones but steadily maintained tone, page by page, throughout the volume.... By the 18th century the reader could depend on a writer controlling the purr of his sentences and giving him a swift, smooth ride. Prose became urbane, macadamized. The plunging horses of 16th century journalese were more like rodeo.[1]

A reader coming fresh to Hopkins after a diet of English verse from the late seventeenth, and eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may well feel how apposite terms like "plunging horses" and "rodeo" are to his poetry. If it is not read as Hopkins intended, it has, as the poet himself noted, "a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence":[2] but this is only in comparison to the smooth, disciplined verse which poetic conventions had fostered over many decades, and it reveals how sharply a poetry of speech is differentiated rhythmically and tonally from a poetry in which print has had a dominant influence. However the influence of print extends far beyond the creation of an even tone and rhythm, and I would like to sketch in its effects in three of four areas.

1. "The Effect of the Printed Book on Language in the 16th Century", Explorations in Communication, Boston, Beacon Press, 1960, p. 129.

2. LRB. p. 79.

There is first the particular kind of tone which print encourages. A culture which has only a handwritten way of recording its language will tend to reproduce the cadences of its speech, as McLuhan suggests, although with the necessary concessions to clarity and logic which the absence of a speaker demands. This inevitably produces a close, and fairly personal relationship between writer and reader. In addition, in a culture which has a low literacy rate, writers are likely to know the kind of person they are addressing, and this too will foster a fairly relaxed tone in their writing. Printing, however, made books widely available, and thereby encouraged the growth of literacy; with increasing literacy, the audience a writer addressed became both a great deal larger and less well-defined. Inevitably the writer developed a more distant and formal tone towards his readers. We have already noted this tone in Tennyson and Swinburne, and its relative absence in Hopkins. This is partly owing to the closeness of his language to speech, but in addition Hopkins often assumes that what he is writing about is of deep personal interest to his readers and as a result he falls naturally and easily into the tone of a man speaking to another about a common experience.

> Yes. Why do we áll, seeing of a soldier, bless him? bless
> Our redcoats, our tars? Both these being, the greater part,
> But frail clay, nay but foul clay.[1]

The second point concerns diction, and is closely related to the issue of tone. With a widening audience, and a more distant relation between writer and readers, writers would have found that a large number

1. Poems, 63, p. 99.

of words could not be used because they were local or dialect words, or too colloquial and homely, or personal, or imprecise. This last problem would have been particularly true of theological, philosophical and technical works where great precision is required in the use of terms. Thus printing produced both a restricted vocabulary for its own use (which gradually was adopted by literate men and women as the vocabulary they used in daily intercourse) and a greater uniformity of meaning in the words of that vocabulary. A similar restriction and regularisation took place in the grammar of the language, created by the need to be clear and logical. By the eighteenth century these needs, which print had largely created, were being erected into prescriptive conditions for the whole language:

> Wordsworth, when he asked that poetic diction should be based on the language of prose and common speech, wrote at the end of a century whose main contribution to English language studies was to codify a standard language and to inculcate a strong sense of linguistic 'correctness' in prose and ordinary speech. Swift, in his famous Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue (1712) clearly sought to fix the literary language in a form that would be comprehensible to future generations, and his ideals were the Classical language, which had remained relatively constant in their literary forms for nearly two millenia. Swift was interested in polishing and refining the vernacular language to bring it up to the excellence of Greek and Latin and make it worthy of polite literature.[1]

Milroy goes on to point out that the many English grammars which appeared in the latter half of the century had the same intention as

1. Milroy. p. 35.

Swift's Proposal, and that in compiling his Dictionary Johnson was imbued with the same precepts.[1] Such thinking had its effect on poetry: in both the eighteenth and later nineteenth centuries powerful norms came to govern the words and grammar a poet chose to use. But again, in Hopkins's case one feels how far from the norm his vocabulary and grammar are, a contrast which Donald Davie puts well:

> One feels that Hopkins could have found a place for every word in the language if only he could have written enough poems. One feels the same about Shakespeare. But there are poets, I find, with whom I feel the other thing - that a selection has been made and is continually being made, that words are thrusting at the poem and being fended off from it, that however many poems these poets wrote certain words would never be allowed into the poems, except as a disastrous oversight.[2]

Print also has a profound effect both on the way people read and on the character of the reader himself. H. J. Chaytor[3] and Walter J. Ong have pointed out that in the pre-printing age, manuscripts were not read as we read print or even handwriting, but were "aids to the recall of sounds."[4] Ong adds, "one ordinarily read aloud even when reading to oneself."[5] Such a way of reading was slow, but it maintained the

1. ibid. pp. 35-36.
2. Purity of Diction in English Verse, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, p. 5.
3. "Reading and Writing." Explorations in Communication, Boston, Beacon Press, 1960, pp. 117-124.
4. Walter J. Ong. Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, Harvard U.P. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958, p. 314.
5. ibid.

primacy of the spoken language and ensured that knowledge, literature, religion, and a wide range of societal affairs remained primarily oral and community experiences. Marshall McLuhan[1] and Terence Hawkes[2] argue that oral communication involves the simultaneous perception of a great deal of information, while visual communication favours single perceptions. This is not generally true, since in normal visual perception the eye can take in a great deal of information simultaneously, for example, from a landscape or a painting, while some aural perception is simple and linear. Thus, the way we perceive depends to some extent on what we perceive, and this makes the point the two above argue for true in the case of the kind of prose which print developed, especially for non-literary uses. This aims at being lucid, unambiguous, flowing, easy to grasp. Some speech is like that too, but this is usually limited to more formal situations like the lecture room; in the main speech has an unevenness, an avoidance of linear logical processes, and a complexity which conveys to the hearer several levels of meaning and several different attitudes simultaneously, mainly through tone and rhythm.[3] Furthermore, speech is constantly changing in response to the changing opinions, attitudes and feelings of the speaker, and hence it has a dynamic, idiosyncratic quality which brings the hearer into direct contact with the speaker. In a culture with only a written way of recording its language, these characteristics are reproduced in the records and read as a slightly formalised kind of speech, but the coming of print slowly changes this: it produces a reader who reads swiftly and silently, a technique carried over to poetry written increasingly under the influence print exerted

1. op. cit.
2. Metaphor, London, Methuen, 1972. Chapt. 3.
3. See Milroy, pp. 20-22.

on the language. The cadences of speech fall away, the sounds of the language become less important, and an even tone appears - all things essential to the lengthy epics of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, since a reader could not be expected to read a poem of ten thousand lines aloud or to cope with the vigour and variety of a speaking voice for the same period.[1]

Another aspect to the way print affected reading lies in the transfer of meaning from sounds to shapes. The process of learning to read involves the gradual dropping out of the sounds of words,[2] and the identification of their meanings with shapes. This may seem too obvious for comment, but it is important to recognise that reading in this way created an entirely different experience of language by transferring it from an auditory sphere to a visual and spatial one. And because the experience of language was now silent and visual, removed from personal human contact, the way people experienced the world was altered. Not only did they see things in a different way, but the basis for experience was changed. Knowledge and experience (which before had been communal) reposed in books bearing the stamp of machinery, not in handwritten, illuminated manuscripts or in the minds of learned men. The human touch became ever more faint. This point is especially important to an examination of Hopkins's poetry since, as the next chapter suggests, the sound of words was fundamental to his theory of language.

Closely related to this new way of reading is a new kind of reader. As David Riesman has said, "Print in replacing the illuminated manuscript, created the silent, compulsive reader, ... "[3] The salient characteristics

1. See p.103 (chapt. 4) for Hopkins's own comments on this process.
2. H. J. Chaytor, op. cit.
3. David Riesman, "The Oral and Written Traditions". Explorations in Communication, Boston, Beacon Press, 1960, p. 112.

of this reader are interesting. For one thing he is going to have a very different cast of mind and attitude to the world:

> Not only in an oral culture, but even in a manuscript culture, the bright boy is likely to be a word-manipulator, an audile, who excels in aural and oral performance. In a typographical culture the visile can come into his own. The orator is perhaps not extinct, but he is now permanently eclipsed.[1]

To this we might add that the poet as maker of an oral poetry, as orator, and the repository of a great deal of an oral culture's history, myths, and social and moral values, is also eclipsed. The visile poet, with different gifts, and aiming to achieve different effects, comes into his own. We can expect a poetry more consciously cerebral, more logical, with reasoned argument and illustration, using syntax and diction with measured control and force - very unlike the passionate verve and colour of an oral poetry, which seeks to carry its hearers with the strength of its feeling and thought, and the apparently magical aural beauty of its verse.

Two other characteristics of the new type of reader are worth mentioning. One is his solitariness. "The book, like the door is an encouragement to isolation: the reader wants to be alone, away from the noise of others."[2] In an oral, or even a manuscript culture, the person is largely engaged with others through the spoken language; isolation of the kind provided by printed books is not often possible, and probably not encouraged in those societies with a powerful community

1. Ong, op. cit. p. 314
2. Riesman, op. cit. p. 112

sense. The effect of such a tendency would be to contribute to the sense of distance from other people. Experience has less to do with people and more to do with things, especially with language itself as a mediator of experience. In extreme cases language becomes a substitute for experience. The second characteristic is really the other side of the same coin. If print produced the solitary reader, it also produced the mentally detached one, in which a critical, reflective and questioning mind began to appear. With the vastly increased availability of facts, ideas, theories, and so on in printed books, this gained a special potency: "Thus the book helps to liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allows the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[1] Print facilitated cultural complexity and dislocation by encouraging a large number of different views about any issue, and different ways of coping with it. The simplicity and uniformity of an oral culture was rapidly removed, partly because numbers were increasing, but also because print developed a more critical and distanced mind, removed from the direct, personal engagement of an oral culture. "If oral communication keeps people together, print is the isolating medium par excellence."[2] In this regard it is interesting to note that the architectural device which ensured personal privacy in a home, the passage, probably only began to be widely used in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries, judging from the word's first appearance in the language with that meaning. The Oxford English Dictionary gives the earliest use of "passage" as 1611, which accords well with the degree of impact print had made on England by then. Education was becoming more widely available, and prosperity was rising as a result of trade, and

1. ibid. p. 113.

2. ibid. p. 114.

the industriousness of the new merchant classes; together these would have provided the motivation and the means to provide the ideal conditions of quiet and solitude which printed books required. (This is not to say of course that other factors did not have a hand in altering the attitude towards privacy in the home.)

The brevity of my remarks on the effects printing has on a language and its users has not, I hope, given too simple or rough an outline; the impact of printing was indeed complex and profound. We can summarise its impact by looking into two main areas. The first is in the relation between writer and readers, where print fostered a far more remote, depersonalised and formal relationship, the very reverse of what an oral or manuscript culture encouraged. In the loss of the more resonant and intimate world which writers and their audiences had lived in lay both the seeds of writers' eventual isolation from their society (which came to fruition this century), and the immediate consequence that the experience of literature became much more private even as it became less personal. At this point, the gap between an oral and a typographic culture is enormous. In the former, art tends to be popular, dramatic, rooted in the hearts and lives of the people; it has a human warmth and colour, handled as it is over many generations; and it has too a living power, since the artists are engaged fully in all the life of their society, and their art is composed to imbue the activities, the language, the myths and legends with the strongest emotional ties in the recitation of their stories and poems. The evocative atmosphere generated when humans gather to hear a performance strengthened the lively communal nature of this kind of art. In contrast the typographical era fosters an art which is far more formal, impersonal, critical, questioning, taken up by the complexities and depths of individual rather than societal existence.

The second area of impact is in the literature itself. The most obvious change is from an oral form of poetry such as drama to a book form such as the seventeenth and eighteenth century epic, which is designed for reading rather than performing.[1] Not only its length, but its considerable complexities and formal design are signs of a shift in the way people read and responded to poetry. Pope's use of chiasmus is an interesting illustration of the way the construction on the page was part of the meaning.[2] A more extreme form of this actually occurred much earlier in George Herbert's "Easter-Wings" and "The Altar", where the shape of the poem on the page is part of the meaning.[3] However, in addition to a poetry more aware of space, we would expect the poetry of an age in which printing has begun to take hold to become more abstract, more speculative, more dependent on a mind which can move between the parts of a poem on the page seeking connections in ideas and images rather than in sound and rhythm. This brings us to the second point, which arises out of the observation I made earlier that print encouraged the replacement of the sounds of language with shapes. This meant that a literature could develop which diminished the sensory hold on its audience that a spoken literature has. Reading quickly and silently demands far less engagement with the words than listening to someone speaking a poem, which in turn demands less than actually speaking the poem oneself. Furthermore, reading tends to involve only the sense of sight, whereas hearing, by a process of sympathetic identification, involves the sensory

1. The novel is of course an even clearer illustration of a book form of literature appearing as a result of printing.

2. Winifred Nowottny's discussion of some lines of Pope's in The Language Poets Use usefully illustrates this point. Athlone Press, University of London, 1965, pp. 11-12.

3. The English Poems of George Herbert (Ed. C. A. Patrides), London, Dent, Rowman and Littlefield, 1974, pp. 47 and 63.

activities of speech as well.[1] The diminution in the significance of the sounds of words meant that writers and poets used less and less the subtlety and precision in tone, rhythm and cadence which an oral poetry had; they came to rely more on argument and the brilliant image, and on conventionalised tones to communicate their meaning. Perhaps more important still, the reduced stress on the sounds of words meant that the capacity of literary language to evoke a powerful sensory response in its audience is diminished. The concrete physicality of words, which echoes the sensory vividness of the images they generate, has an extraordinary evocative power when used in the way that, say, Chaucer, or Shakespeare, or Hopkins do. In addition, as the experience of language and literature became more visual and silent, it meant both that the experience of language rhythms became less fully sensory and vivid, and that rhythms in poetry would tend to become less functional - more of a convention and an ornament. One can see something of this happening in Augustan poetry, where the strict regularisation of poetic rhythms meant that any play of the strong, stressy rhythms which are natural to the language was suppressed. Augustan rhythms are refined and delicate instruments, but often they are too regular and contrived to be entirely pleasing. The more natural rhythms of English have a variety, and a subtlety and precision in relating sound to sense that are able to move us at very deep levels of our beings; like music, they seem to bypass our conscious processes and strike into those centres where so many of the springs of feeling, intuition and action are held. These are points I will go into in more detail in later chapters, but it is worth giving here two quotations as illustrations of the differences I have been

1. Seymour Chatman, A Theory of Meter, The Hague, Mouton and Co., 1965, p. 48.

drawing attention to. The first is from John Dryden's "Prologue to Caesar Borgia", written in 1679:

> They have a civil way in Italy
> By smelling perfume to make you dye,
> A trick would make you lay your Snuff-box by.
> Murder's a Trade - as known and practis'd there,
> That 'tis Infallible as is the Chair -
> But mark their Feasts, you shall behold such Pranks,
> The Pope says Grace, but 'tis the Devil gives Thanks.[1]

The second is from an early mature poem by Hopkins:

> ... up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour
> Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier
> Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?[2]

In the first we are aware of an epigrammatic wit, an appositeness in illustration and image, a power of swift, supple thought; in the second we have instead a sense of the physical texture of words and their inter-relations, of the subtle and exact rhythmic shifts in relation to the sense, and of an entranced speaker, spontaneously voicing his perceptions and emotions in a language which fuses image, idea and feeling into one.

The historical period in English literature which reveals these transitions most clearly is the seventeenth century. As the oral and communal nature of the literary experience declined, the distinction

1. The Works of John Dryden Vol. 1, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1956, p. 162, lines 36-42.

2. Poems, 38, p. 20.

between popular and serious literature became more marked. In the Elizabethan era, the greatest literature had also been the most popular, but by the eighteenth century most serious literature was written for the educated, polite part of society. It was formal, urbane, polished, with conventionalised forms and tones; the diction and syntax were restricted but highly developed and ornate, while the rhythms were dominated by strict metres. All this is a long way from the language of Donne and Shakespeare; even where theirs is elevated and formal, they retain the diction, tones and rhythms of energetic discourse, of the "language really used by men", and thereby create that sense of direct personal communication with each reader. If there is a speech tone in Augustan verse, it is a public one, directed at an anonymous audience. Something of this, as well as the evolution in the seventeenth century, can be gathered from the following extracts from Donne, Milton and Pope. I have tried to choose poems of roughly the same type in terms of versification and purpose, but changes over the years make this a difficult condition to meet:

> Well; I may now receive, and die; my sin
> Indeed is great, but I have been in
> A purgatory, such as feared hell is
> A recreation, and scant map of this.
> My mind, neither with pride's itch, nor yet hath been
> Poisoned with love to see, to be seen.[1]

> Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
> Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
> I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,

1. "Satire 4", John Donne, The Complete English Poems. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1971, p. 164, lines 1-6.

And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.[1]

See the wild Waste of all-devouring years!
How Rome her own sad Sepulchre appears,
With nodding arches, broken temples spread!
The very Tombs now vanish'd like their dead!
Imperial wonders rais'd on Nations spoil'd,
Were mix'd with Slaves the groaning Martyr toil'd:
Huge Theatres, that now unpeopled Woods,
Now drain'd a distant country of her Floods:
Fanes, which admiring Gods with pride survey,
Statues of Men, scarce less alive than they![2]

In the light of what has been said so far, Hopkins would appear to fall somewhere between a poet like Donne and the alliterative poets of the middle ages, since he combines the lyric speaking voice and more sophisticated poetic forms with the powerful alliterative patterns of the earlier poetry. In contrast, his contemporaries would seem to belong much nearer to the Augustan age, and to write a poetry in a language heavily influenced by the exigencies of print. In this contrast one can see that Hopkins's poetry was a reassertion of the primacy of speech, of the peculiar, evocative potency that the sounds and rhythms of a language have for its native speakers, and of the oral and communal nature

1. "Lycidas", The Portable Milton, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1977. pp. 107-108, lines 1-9.

2. "Epistle V", Moral Essays, The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, London, MacMillan & Co., 1907. p. 263, lines 1-10.

of poetry. It is a living art when it grows up out of the lives, and language of the people for whom it is written, and in adopting this approach Hopkins implies a different role and status for the poet, bringing him from his relative isolation into his community and restoring something of the importance he had in an oral culture. This is a point we must return to in a different context later,[1] and we can turn now to the consideration of another important historical influence, the work of Peter Ramus (1515-1572).

Walter J. Ong in his book Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue,[2] attributes in large measure to Ramus a deeply significant change in sensibility in Europe during the late sixteenth and seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He identifies this change as the move from an ontology and epistemology based in an oral, communal experience of the world - where the human personality and voice dominate - to an ontology and epistemology which is separable from the human context - spatial, silent, "packaged" in models and diagrams, in books and teaching courses.[3] In other words, Ramus gave the drift towards a greater critical objectivity in dealing with the various spheres of knowledge (which the Renaissance had started) more momentum.[4] In some ways this was a considerable advance: scholarship was progressively freed from the constraints imposed by the world view of medieval culture - its theology, philosophy, myths and history - and enabled to see things in other terms and perhaps more as they were in themselves. But Ramus's work had less satisfying results as well, as we shall see.

1. See Chapter 5.
2. Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958.
3. ibid., pp. 288-292, 307-318.
4. cf. Plumb, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

In simple terms, Ramus's particular contribution was the reorganisation of classical rhetoric in such a way that the creative faculties were denied access to the world of the voice (and hence to the complexity, vitality - the wholeness of the human community), and directed into dialectic. Ong describes the reorganisation as follows:

> In the main classical or Ciceronian tradition, rhetoric had consisted in its fullness of five "parts", namely, invention (inventio) or the discovery of "arguments", arrangement (dispositio) or the organisation of the arguments discovered, style (elecutio - commonly interpreted more or less as an additive to the bare arguments), memory (memoria), and delivery (pronuntiatio). The last two parts could belong to rhetoric, obviously to us, only insofar as rhetoric was taken in its original and strict sense as referring to oratory, oral delivery. But they were retained nevertheless, and without comment for the most part, long past the Renaissance. The original sense of rhetoric and the oral set of mind which went with it and which felt that oratory was the paradigm of all discourse and thought, died hard. Ramus found that Cicero and others had analysed dialectic itself as consisting of invention and arrangement (also called judgement, iudicium). He therefore lopped off rhetorical invention and arrangement from rhetoric and assigned all invention and arrangement to dialectic or logic. Memory he discarded completely.[2]

This reorganisation made a considerable impact on European sensibility:

1. cf. Plumb, op. cit. pp. 12-13.

2. Introduction to Petrus Ramus Scholae in Liberales Artes, Hildesheim, George Olms Verlag, 1970, pp. VIII-IX.

> ... it is a rhetoric which has renounced any possibility of invention within this speaker-auditor framework; it protests in principle if not in actuality, that invention is restricted to a dialectical world where there is no voice but only a kind of vision. By its very structure, Ramist rhetoric asserts to all who are able to sense its implications that there is no way to discovery or to understanding through voice, and ultimately seems to deny that the processes of person-to-person communication play any necessary role in intellectual life.[1]

> The essence of the Ramist revolution was the reduction of the personalized resonant human world of sound to a depersonalized silent world of space. In terms of language it meant a reduction from the richly ambiguous multi-level meaning of the voice engaged in dialogue, to the evenly spaced single-level 'clarity' of the written word. In literary terms it involves a shift in emphasis from the oral mode of drama .... to the literary mode of the printed book.[2]

In other words, knowledge developed in the intellectual fencing of debate and argument, where one has to take account of the whole humanity of one's opponent (as in the Platonic dialogues), or out of a people's accumulated experience, or even in a tradition of dramatic literature, became less and less significant. Increasingly, the processes whereby men understood the world lost the feel of human hearts and voices and

1. Ong, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue, p. 288.

2. Hawkes, op. cit. p. 30. It should perhaps be said that print is as ambiguous as the voice, but in different ways. Speech can communicate several meanings, some contradictory or ironic, simultaneously, and we are in no doubt as to what is meant; print on the other hand can be as ambiguous in this sense, but it lacks the precision and certainty of meaning: there is often a teasing uncertainty about all the possible meanings which may or may not be intended.

became wedded to reason, discursive argument, theories. These are long-term results and bring us right up to our own century, which has been the century of warring ideologies. However, one can see more immediate results appearing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with their stress on reason and on "systems":

> Ramus had insisted that analysis opened ideas like boxes, and it is certainly significant that the post-Ramist age produced so much more than its share of books identified by their titles as "keys" to one thing or another. In this same age the notion of "content" as applied to books is extended, so that statements, the words of which statements consist, and concepts or ideas themselves are habitually considered as "containing" truth. An epistemology based on the notion of truth as "content" begins to appear. Out of the twin notions of content and analysis is bred the vast idea-, system-, and method- literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This literature consists of treatises on practically all conceivable forms of knowledge labelled indiscriminately "ideas" or "systems" or "methods" of the various subjects, and conceived of as box-like units laid hold of by the mind in such a way that they are fully and adequately treated by being "opened" in an analysis.[1]

Some of the effects of Ramism are very similar to those of print, and they obviously reinforced one another's influence; especially significant are those tendencies towards isolation and depersonalization, and towards an imbalance - even rift - in man's faculties through an excessive emphasis on the powers of reason. The former tendency would

1. Ong, op. cit. p. 288.

also have been given greater momentum as a result of the growth in population and cities. The results were in some respects unfortunate, since, for one thing, the gap between the common folk (who have a strong community sense) and the educated class widened, which meant a fair degree of social dislocation was being stored up. However, what society lost on the one hand was partly offset by what was gained on the other. The discovery of a distance between oneself and one's culture enables one to find an identity and a fulfilment more suited to oneself, less determined by social functions. It leads to a greater independence and a more critical disposition, especially about one's society.[1] It is reasonable to suppose that one reason why development in so many spheres has been so rapid in the last two centuries is that the individual has been given the freedom to think and work fairly independently in a society which does not need to enforce strict moral, religious and social systems - as primitive societies in dangerous environments need to do in order to ensure their survival.[2] However, if this is the case, rapid development (and growth) has exacted a heavy price, for though every age has its reasons for isolating people, it is probably true that the sense of alienation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (especially the latter) has been deeper and more widespread than before.

A similar double-edged character is found to the Ramist stress on dialectic, and in the cast of mind his reorganisation produced: it developed a visual, spatial mental set, and channeled man's creative faculities of invention and arrangement into the circumscribed world of dialectic. The result was that it helped man to develop the frame

1. Riesman, op. cit. p. 113.
2. For an interesting illustration of this, see Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, London, Heineman, 1965.

of reference suited to the scientific method but at the same time it made a considerable contribution to what T. S. Eliot called the "dissociation of sensibility" in the seventeenth century.[1] Since Eliot's reference, and our interest, is largely literary, it is best to consider this from the point of view of literary history. Printing and Ramism together created a dislocation in the way man thought and in his conception of the artistic process. Most obvious is the separation of thought from the images, metaphors, symbols, and spontaneous linguistic patterns which normally are the very stuff of thought:

> This assignment of invention and arrangement entirely to logic and the concomitant annihilation of memory left only style and delivery for rhetoric out of its original five parts. Style, Ramus explained, consisted of the use of tropes (for example, metaphor) and figures (for example, alliteration).
>
> * * *
>
> ... rhetoric, ... became the study of how to apply tropes (plays on sense such as metaphor and the like) and figures (plays on sound such as alliteration and the like) to the naked sinews of logical discourse.[2]

One can clearly see the end results of Ramist rhetoric in passages like the following from Dryden and Locke:

1. I use the phrase in the sense that it refers to a dislocation in man's faculties of feeling, thought and sensory perceptions, the last being intimately connected with the first two. Any suggestion that the phrase refers to the divisions of motive, conscience, feeling, and reason is limited strictly to the point that this perennial human experience may contribute to, but not be a "dissociation of sensibility" in the first sense. The first is an epistemological issue, the second an ontological one.

2. Walter J. Ong, Introduction to Petrus Ramus Scholae in Liberales Artes, p. ix.

> The Florid, Elevated and Figurative way is for the Passions; for Love and Hatred, Fear and Anger, are begotten in the Soul by shewing their Objects out of their true proportion; either greater than the Life, or less; but Instruction is to be given by shewing them what they naturally are. A Man is to be cheated into Passion, but to be reason'd into Truth.[1]

> ... all the artificial and figurative applications of Words Eloquence hath invented are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong Ideas, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgement, and so indeed are perfect cheat ...[2]

From my earlier remarks, it is clear that by fostering a lucid and rather impersonal flow of thought, print would have increased the spread and impact of the Ramist thinking we find epitomized in Dryden and Locke, with their emphasis on "Reason" and "Judgement". Print may also have had a part in developing the unusually strong distrust and fear of the "Passions". Ramism took away the emotional power of the voice from the processes of thought, and print supplied a form of language where the passions were concealed or refined out of existence, and where cool reason and common-sense would prevail (something the English would have found congenial after the tumult and chaos caused by the Civil War; it was little wonder that the Augustan age feared the passions). Also very important is the direct link made by both Locke and Dryden between the passions and the figurative uses of language, which is an inevitable consequence of the severe limitations placed on rhetoric by Ramus. As

1. Preface to Religio Laici, The Works of John Dryden Vol. 2, Poems 1681-1684 (Ed. H. T. Swedenberg Jnr.), Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1972, p. 109.

2. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 1690, Book III, Chapter X, "Of the Abuse of Words". (Ed. Peter H. Nidditch) London, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975. p. 508.

Ong says, the Ramist division meant that poetry was made by adding tropes and figures to the "naked sinews of logical discourse", but equally important was the fact that Ramus's reorganisation denigrated feeling by placing the accent on dialectic, and in the end it meant that what tropes and figures were used were to be separated as far as possible from feeling so that they could illustrate the naked thought untrammeled by feeling. Such a view was only possible once a division had been forced between thought and feeling, and it was largely a false division, if we are to trust our experience of Elizabethan and Romantic poetry. In the poetry of the Elizabethan era, for example, (largely an oral one) thought, feeling and image are an indissoluble entity at the instant of conception, and flow strongly in a single channel; the seamlessness and depth of the poetry give it an extraordinary sweep and power:

> ... his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd against
> The deep damnation of his taking-off;
> And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's Cherubims, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind.[1]

In contrast, as is well known, Augustan poetry saw the image, metaphor or figure as something to be <u>added</u> to the poetry, as an illustration or an ornament to beautify. Dryden's famous "pimples" image provides one example, but we do not have to look far to find the same practice elsewhere:

1. <u>Macbeth</u>, 1, vii, lines 18-25.

But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a Critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.[1]

In effect, Ramism divided man within himself, and succeeded in forcing thought, feeling, trope and figure apart, making them flow in separate channels, weakened and meagre; as a result his poetry became circumscribed, impoverished. It lost the power and fullness of the earlier poetry. With so much Augustan poetry we admire the marvellous technical skill, the intellectual verve and penetration, but we remain apart from it. With Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Yeats, the enormous richness and sympathy and imaginative energy of their vision, and the completeness of their appeal to the reader at every level catch us up in the life of the poetry, moving us, enlarging us, enriching us. A great deal of the poetry we value most (and therefore perhaps consider the greatest) demands and creates this very close engagement of reader and work - a point we will return to later on a number of occasions because of its importance.

The Romantic revolution was of course a powerful reaction against the thinking which had dominated the previous century and a half, and in the process had led poetry into a dead end. It is significant that in their theoretical formulations the Romantic writers pinpointed with wonderful clarity and completeness both the problems with the thinking which had impoverished poetry in the eighteenth century and the way out.

1. Pope, An Essay in Criticism, Lines 46-51. My underlining.

Quite consciously they aimed to reunite at the very earliest point in the artistic process the elements Ramus had contrived to separate:

> What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts and emotions of the poet's own mind. The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, ... reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.[1]

In view of the discussion of Ramism, it is interesting that Coleridge should consider "idea" and "image" as "opposite or discordant", and equally interesting that there is a fair degree of emphasis on the process

1. S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, London, Dent, 1965, pp. 173-174. My underlining.

of unification.[1] Although the Romantic theorists had found a way forward for poetry, the Ramist legacy took its toll. The poetry of the Elizabethan period and before had possessed a unity and harmony such as Coleridge describes above quite naturally and spontaneously; whereas the earlier poets had never needed to think about what they were doing in that respect, the Romantic poets did, and inevitably their awareness of what they were trying to achieve and the effort to achieve it show through from time to time. This problem was compounded by the longer historical perspective they had (at the end of which Shakespeare loomed huge, an inspiration and a frustratingly impossible ideal), and by the more inclusive, sophisticated and intellectual theory of poetry they developed.

Most of these remarks are true of Hopkins as well: his great stress on unity at every level in art,[2] his elaborate poetics, his consciousness of how different his poetry was in aim and practice from that of his contemporaries, - all reveal him as a later member of the same line running from Blake and Wordsworth which had fought to undo what Ramism had done and rediscover the earlier authoritative strength of poetry. In Hopkins's case, he was not rejecting Ramism as such, but rather the particular amalgam of Ramist thought and post-Ramist reaction, which asserted itself after the Romantic period in the form of a dissociation of the feeling from the thought (with the former often excessive and contrived), the sacrifice of the sense to the sound, the adoption of a formal and "poetic" tone, syntax and diction, the diffuseness and

1. This is clearer in Coleridge's earlier remarks, in Chapter 13. "It [the secondary imagination] dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify." ibid. p. 167.

2. This is a point I come back to on several occasions. See especially Chapter 10.

length of so many of the poems. In various ways, the elements of poetry had begun to pull apart from one another, and Hopkins reasserted the necessity for the creative act to fuse them, to make them serve one another and the poem, and in doing so to give the poem a power and depth far beyond the sum of those distinguishable elements that go into it. (It is worth noting that Hopkins did not think of the process of writing poetry in the same terms as Wordsworth and Coleridge did - there is scarcely a mention of the imagination in the same sense or context as Wordsworth and Coleridge used the idea. This may be partly because as far as Hopkins was concerned it went without saying, but it is also likely to be because he reached the same position via another road - his theory of language - and the issue never presented itself to him as needing a solution in the Coleridgean form.)

Probably the most singular parallel between Wordsworth and Hopkins is in their espousal of a poetic language drawn from the language ordinarily used in society - perhaps especially the language of labouring folk. Hopkins's position is given in the now famous statement that " .... it seems to me that the poetical language of an age shd. be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not ... an obsolete one",[1] while Wordsworth's can be found in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads:

> The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or discribe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, ...

* * *

1. LRB. p. 89.

> The language, too, of these men has been adopted ... because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets ....[1]

There are differences in theory between the two poets in regard to what each thinks a poet should do to the "current language" he is using, but in the main, Hopkins would have thoroughly approved Wordsworth's sentiments here.[2] The agreement is striking for the way it reveals both poets' sense of serious defects in the poetry of their age - the consequences of the dislocation of sensibility we have been looking at - and their instinctive grasp of the solution. It is deeply significant that both poets should have turned to a pre-Ramist concept of language as the way out of the impasse: here was a language which had a directness, simplicity and emphasis lacking elsewhere in poetry; above all it was a language which was drawn from a living, oral culture, where there was no dislocation or imbalance in the use of man's faculties. This was perhaps partly because the effects of education had not penetrated a naturally conservative group, but the main reason in my view is that the voice engaged in

1. English Critical Texts (Eds. D. J. Enright and Ernst de Chickera), London, O.U.P., 1962, pp. 164-165.

2. Hopkins's idea that "current language" should be "heightened" makes in effect the same criticisms of Wordsworth's theorizing as does Coleridge in Chapters 19 and 20 of the Biographia Literaria, and embodies the formulations Coleridge developed in those chapters as a more satisfactory account of Wordsworth's achievement.

ordinary conversation conveys fully the whole sensibility of a person - his thoughts, his feelings, and how he conceives or experiences them, are captured without any sense of tension or distinction between them. As a result, the language was able to express without effort or self-consciousness a complete and balanced fusion of thought and feeling through its images and figures. Furthermore, it was a living language; it had the feel of human voices and minds on it, and consequently it was, in Wordsworth's phrase "a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language". By its sympathetic engagement with the language and lives of ordinary people, the kind of poetry adopted by Wordsworth and Hopkins addresses itself to them, involves poet and readers in a dialogue on more equal terms than, for example, Augustan poetry does. Here we approach much closer to an oral and dramatic poetry in an age of printing, since we hear, in Robert Frost's words, "the speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination."[1]

Hopkins was, therefore, very much a later Wordsworth in his opposition to the effects of Ramism and in his attempts to recover for poetry the inspiration, the power and control of the imagination, which it had had before and lost on two occasions. However, although this makes him the heir to the early Romantic poets, it should be stressed that he also belongs to the line which goes back through Milton to Shakespeare and Donne, since his poetry is an attempt to remake English poetry in the image of the earlier poets' achievement. It is no coincidence that for both the Romantic poets and Hopkins, Shakespeare was the ideal, the illustration par excellence of their theories, and the precedent for

1. Robert Frost, from the Introduction to A Way Out, quoted by Reuben Brower, op. cit. p. 19.

many of their experiments.[1] In Hopkins's case this is of a piece with his efforts to escape from the language of print and write a poetry of speech - a fact which indicates that his roots lie deeper still in time, in the English alliterative tradition; as I noted earlier, this is also the feature which most sharply distinguishes him from his predecessors and contemporaries in the nineteenth century.

So far I have argued that Hopkins's poetry lies well outside the mainstream of poetry in the latter half of the nineteenth century, most notably in his efforts to get away from the effects of print on the language, and from the amalgam of Ramist and anti-Ramist thought I mentioned a little earlier. This is not to say that Hopkins completely escaped these influences (not all of them could be resisted), or that he was entirely successful in achieving his aims. The self-consciousness and effort I noted before in the Romantic poets[2] are rather more apparent in Hopkins, perhaps because he was even more conscious of how unusual his poetry was.[3] In another respect though, Hopkins is part of the nineteenth century and this we must now consider briefly.

Robert Langbaum has identified as a peculiarly Romantic problem the split between subjectivity and objectivity - man's loss of a sense of value and meaning in the objective world which accorded fully with his own sense of himself - his value, his position in the universe, his understanding of truth.[4] Several factors co-operated in bringing this problem to birth for the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: one

1. For Hopkins's views on Shakespeare, see for example LRB. pp. 92-93, 89, 163; CRWD., pp. 74, 6, 14-15, 29; FL., pp. 218-219, 381-382.

2. See p. 39.

3. See Milroy pp. 215-216 for a discussion of one of Hopkins's failures (the opening sentence of "The Bugler's First Communion") in terms close to these.

4. The Poetry of Experience, London, Chatto and Windus, 1957, p. 28.

important cause was the growth in scientific knowledge: an understanding of the cosmos in Copernican terms, of the laws of nature in terms of Newtonian physics, of the biological processes which controlled man, beast and plant, made for a radical transformation in the way man conceived the universe. Medieval cosmology and biology had been a curious mixture of distorted observation, superstition, mythology and metaphysics, but it saw the natural order as a fabric into which the supernatural was woven or behind which it lay, pressing through; Christian cosmology had made nature alive with the presence of God, and of his angels, while the order and beauty testified to the reality and character of the Creator. But the new knowledge appeared to make most of the universe empty, and subject to physical laws (which were in one sense more complex and inexplicable than the earlier explanations): the result was that the universe began to lose the resonant, luminous significance it had previously had - it was no longer charged with God's direct control and presence; it no longer reflected in quite the same way aspects of the divine nature, just as man himself did, though rather different ones. A second factor in this change was the decline in belief in Christianity. The Church's position and its reaction to the new knowledge were probably contributory factors, but the real decline began rather later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which suggests that other factors were at work. One was the new science, another was the emphasis on reason (and here we can point another finger at Ramism). Both undermined belief by pointing away from it towards perception on the one hand, and the mind on the other. Thus in several ways the view of the universe which had harmonized with man's view of himself was slowly discredited, and by degrees it lost its hold on the Western imagination.

A result of this rift between man and nature was that man came to feel himself alone in an alien universe; science implied that it was merely physical, while man knew himself to be manifestly far more than merely physical. The natural order no longer supplied an objective justification for his feelings about himself. This isolation (which, I should stress, was only felt by those who were exposed by education and class to these influences) was exacerbated by Ramism in two oblique ways: one was the dissociation of sensibility discussed earlier, which compounded an outer division with an inner one, and the other was the Ramist emphasis on things rather than people.[1] Man was separated not only from the natural order but from his own kind as well, a problem which Ramus's reorganisation of dialectic and rhetoric emphasized:

> .... the Ramist reworking of dialectic and rhetoric furthered the elimination of sound and voice from man's understanding of the intellectual world and helped create within the human spirit itself the silences of a spatialized universe.[2]

The effect of these developments on literature was considerable, and I propose to look at two aspects in particular - the emergence of a new type of poem, and the impact on the poet. To take the latter first: in ways I have commented on already, printing and the various ramifications of Ramist thought tended to isolate the poet from his society. The loss of significance in the natural world would have taken the isolation a step further, and it is not surprising that increasingly the poet feels he is writing for a smaller and smaller audience. In the

1. Ong, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue, p. 287.

2. ibid. p. 318.

eighteenth century this was accentuated by the strict canons of form and good taste which dominated poetry. Poetry lost its popular appeal and was directed at a relatively small group of educated men and women who sustained and encouraged a poetry for a circumscribed literary taste. From the poet's point of view, it is true that a sense of isolation will tend to make him write for the smaller audience who will respond to his work - something which may sharpen his isolation. In the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this was a problem compounded by the civil war, by the increasing size and complexity of the society, and by the emergence of greater wealth in the upper ranks of society, all of which in creating or accentuating divisions removed the relative cultural uniformity which had made a popular literature possible a century or so before, and of course for many years before that.

Wordsworth tried to reverse this tendency and sought to give poetry a wider appeal by adopting a natural language and tone, and by reasserting the poet's importance as a man speaking to men about ideas, events, and experiences which were of fundamental value to men, both in the poet's own age and in later ones.[1] Wordsworth also asserted the poet's right to take anything as his subject (in contrast to the views of the eighteenth century) - the poet would in fact be at the frontiers of man's activities.[2] However, such a reaction was short-lived, because as M. H. Abrams has pointed out,[3] once later Romantic theory had given the poet primacy as the arbiter of taste and poetic excellence, and the poetic imagination the responsibility for poetry and for remaking, even redeeming the poet's

1. "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads", English Critical Texts, pp. 171-173.
2. ibid. p. 175.
3. The Mirror and the Lamp, New York, O.U.P., 1953, pp. 25-26.

experience (not necessarily his society's), the poet had no responsibilities to an audience, did not in fact need one: "The poet's audience is reduced to a single member, consisting of the poet himself".[1] Abrams quotes Keats's saying in a letter to Reynolds "I never wrote one single line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought".[2] Perhaps more telling is Abrams' quotation from Shelley's Defence of Poetry, in which we hear the isolation, even the loneliness which the poet's great gifts and liberation from society have brought: "A poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician ...".[3] The culmination of this trend in Romanticism was reached with Keble and Newman in their idea that poetry was, essentially, a state of mind and feeling rather than an artefact in language although it did issue in "rhythmic language".[4] Nevertheless, the point is clear that Wordsworth's position was an anomalous one: the conditions in society were such that the poet would tend to be isolated; serious poetry would never again have the audience it had possessed in Shakespeare's time. But what is of equal concern is not only that Wordsworth was right and the conditions unfortunately not propitious, but that artistic isolation was to turn to alienation: Stephen Dedalus is the archetype of the artist in exile from his audience. And in our own century we have seen the emergence of a poetry so rarefied, so learned and abstruse that only the very few can follow the poet into these distant regions.[5]

1. ibid. p. 25.

2. ibid. p. 26.

3. ibid.

4. Alba H. Warren, Jr., English Poetic Theory 1825-1865, London, Frank Cass & Co. 1966, pp. 30, 39-40, 41, 42-43, 48, 49-53, 57.

5. For an interesting discussion of this point, see C.S. Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1961, pp. 96-99.

Hopkins's position is even more anomalous than Wordsworth's. He set great store by an audience for good poetry, as will appear later,[1] but he is also one of the very few major English poets who was almost completely unknown at his death, and in his case for about another thirty years after that. The number of people who knew of his mature work might have numbered fifteen or so when he died. However, Hopkins's case is a rather unique one. Quite apart from these factors tending to isolate the poet which I have noted, Hopkins was faced with several others: there was first the fact that he belonged to a religious order which was feared and disliked in Britain; and an added complication in this connection was his feeling that he ought not to publish without unsolicited permission from his superiors.[2] Since two of his poems had been rejected by the Month he may have felt the effort was not worth his while: if a Catholic journal rejected Catholic poems he was not likely to have them accepted elsewhere.[3] There was secondly Hopkins's acute sensitivity about his work - he knew all too well that he was writing an extraordinary poetry by nineteenth century standards, and he did not want to be exposed to the ridicule and harsh criticism which would surely greet his work. Another related factor was that he was writing an overtly religious and Catholic poetry for the most part, in a climate which would not have found it congenial. Where Donne knew his concerns were shared by most of his potential readers, Hopkins knew his were not, and inevitably he felt more isolated and self-conscious. In all of these factors, one can detect Hopkins's concern not to bring his Lord or his order or himself into any ridicule or disrepute.[4]

1. See chapt. 5.
2. See LRB. p. 66.
3. ibid. pp. 65-66.
4. See CRWD. pp. 28-31. SDW. pp. 253-254.

Hopkins's extreme isolation presents one of the most unusual paradoxes about the man. So hidden a poet never wrote a poetry so fully intended for an audience, or which brings a reader into such close contact with the poems and through them, with the poet. At the simplest level his isolation meant that he was not compelled to make any concessions to vulgar popular opinion, though it also meant he was allowed to develop his art without the check of an audience, and with his characteristic thoroughness he developed it to the very limit: his final elaborations are so dependent on the most acute auditory sensibility that it is difficult for a generation accustomed to the silence and speed of print to grasp what he is doing.[1] Hopkins was aware of a number of the advantages and problems attached to his lack of an audience,[2] but he probably was not aware of how much his work was affected in other ways. One reason why his poems have so strong a sense (by nineteenth and twentieth century standards) of being directed at a reader for his close - and sometimes urgent - attention is that his isolation made all the more sharply felt his need for a sympathetic and responsive audience; as a poet and as a Jesuit his feelings in this regard were identical. There is too the fact that Hopkins had a gregarious personality which needed companionship and encouragement, something his order and poetic idiosyncrasy denied him.[3] At the same time this conflict may have encouraged him, in his efforts to create that contact between himself and his potential readers, to develop so extensively his unusual approach to poetry, since it was for him the only way forward for a poetry which was losing its hold on the language people really used and hence on its audience.

1. See, as the best examples, "Tom's Garland" and"Harry Ploughman". Poems, 70, p. 103 & 71, p. 104.

2. See LRB. pp. 46, 291.

3. See LRB. pp. 218-219.

Perhaps the most significant consequence of Hopkins's isolation was that it made him one of the first poets to experience fully the loneliness and desolation of the isolating tendencies we have noted from time to time in this chapter. I noted earlier that printing (in conjunction with factors like the increasing size and complexity of society) would tend to foster a poetry "taken up by the complexities and depths of individual rather than societal existence",[1] and in Hopkins one can see the end result of these and other influences. The poems of desolation are extremely private and frank documents of Hopkins's suffering, but they were at the time they were written also remarkably proleptic. In this respect Hopkins is the reluctant heir to all those social forces which, as a man and a poet, cut him (and his successors in this century) off from his society. It made him in one more way a rather different nineteenth century poet.

The second aspect I proposed to look at was the appearance of a new type of poem, what Dr Johnson called "local poetry".[2] Interestingly, there is considerable agreement between Walter Ong and Robert Langbaum about this, although they approach it from very different positions and Ong does not appear to know of Langbaum's book. Ong suggests that Ramism led to a poetry which was directed at objects rather than people, and it tended to be musing, reflective, said to no-one in particular - "The Ramist arts of discourse are monologue arts".[3] Ong comments:

1. See p. 23.
2. R. Langbaum, op, cit. p. 39.
3. Ong, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue, p. 287.

> This orientation is very profound and of a piece with the orientation of Ramism toward an object world (associated with visual perception) rather than toward a person world (associated with voice and auditory perception).[1]

This attitude, once it took root, led to a discursive poetry:

> When the Puritan mentality, which is here the Ramist mentality, produces poetry, it is at first blatantly didactic, but shades gradually into reflective poetry which does not talk to anyone in particular but meditates on objects, such as the moon. There is a curious connection here between the plain-style mentality and some later Romantic developments.[2]

The later romantic developments included some of the things Hopkins was reacting against - the effusive solitary musings of later nineteenth century verse - but there is an earlier connection to Dr Johnson's "local poetry", which arose, according to Langbaum, as an attempt to re-form the divided sensibility discussed earlier:

> The attempt began with those poets of the neo-classic age who in trying ... to be lyrical, found it necessary to give their lyrical poems a dramatic setting, to draw their feelings and reflections out of the observation of a scene remarkable for its beauty or picturesqueness. The result was a lyric type of which Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard is the best known example.[3]

1. ibid. p. 237.
2. ibid. pp. 287-288.
3. Langbaum, op. cit. pp. 38-39.

We may concede Langbaum's hypothesis, but there is another source for this poetry - the Ramist emphasis on things rather than people. One can see quite clearly the working out of this thought in the transition from Shakespeare, whose plays are so deeply concerned with the actions of men and women within society, which included the natural world, as we know from plays like Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and King Lear, to the "local poetry", which revolves around a single person's reaction to a natural world that does not talk back (there is little possibility of dialogue here). This is a serious narrowing of scope and a source of the poetry's weakness. Langbaum suggests that another weakness of this kind of poetry is in the failure of the thought and emotion apparently generated by the scene being considered to connect and fuse with it:

> We do not believe in it as a perceived object, which is to say we do not believe that the thought proceeds from the emotion and that both proceed from the river. Thought, emotion and object are discrete quantities in mere juxtaposition.[1]

In other words, the dissociation of sensibility which this poetry was intended to remedy flawed it seriously from the outset, and it was unlikely to succeed anyway. Another cause of its weakness can be found in factors discussed earlier: Ramism, as Ong pointed out, directed people towards objects; yet as people turned their attention to the natural world, they found increasingly that the growth of scientific knowledge and the decline in faith deprived them of a comprehensive, sophisticated theological and philosophical system which had made sense of the cosmos; there was no longer an adequate way of interpreting the

1. ibid. p. 40.

created order, no harmonizing framework to mediate between man and the universe.

Both these weaknesses were dealt with by the Romantic poets: in the imagination they found the harmonizing, unifying power which solved the problem of a dislocated sensibility; and in Wordsworth and Coleridge (and perhaps Keats) were found the intellects capable of developing a vision of the world and man's place in it which possessed the vitality, beauty and intellectual strength to take over from the earlier Christian understanding. It took root so firmly in Britain - and in Europe for that matter - because it accorded so exactly with (and helped to explain) man's abiding awe and wonder at the world around him. From a literary point of view it enabled the Romantic poets to turn the "meditative-descriptive poem"[1] (as Langbaum calls it) and its offshoots into instruments capable of the most moving and beautiful poetry. Wordsworth's Prelude is probably the most famous example but there are many poems which fall into this category.

Although it means using the term rather more loosely, a number of Hopkins's poems are a kind of meditative-descriptive poem - they begin with descriptions of some scene or event in the natural world which has evoked strong emotion and go on to draw out the significance of the experience in terms of various ideas and systems, mainly religious. This pattern has been roundly criticised by Yvor Winters as the tacking on of a religious rationale which insufficiently justifies the strength of Hopkins's response; there is an excess of feeling and a failure to bridge the gap between the emotion and thought.[2] Langbaum's criticisms

1. ibid. p. 39.

2. "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins", The Function of Criticism, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962. pp. 123-135.

of the meditative-descriptive poem are very similar and are justly made of some of Hopkins's poems - "The Starlight Night" for example.[1] However, having said that, it must be emphasized that in many other respects, Hopkins's poems are unlike meditative-descriptive lyrics: they are too dense, penetrating, and vigorous in thought and emotion to be classed with them. The most important difference though is in Hopkins's Christianity: his veneration and use of nature in his poetry owe a great deal to early Romanticism,[2] but the system he used to interpret it was a Christian one derived largely from the age of faith, and as a result his poetry is a remarkable fusion of early and late traditions in English. Generally his work benefited from the Christian theology he adopted at his conversion since it gave him a powerful and rigorous intellectual system which saved him from the vague, emotional ramblings Romantic poetry was prone to and which the early Hopkins showed a liking for.[3] On the other hand the Romantic legacy gave his poetry the brimming wonder and excitement which prevented the theology from being dry dogma. Thus, overall in this regard, Hopkins is more obviously a descendant of the early Romantic poets, but as before he has drawn heavily on a much older tradition, and this has given his poetry a unique character and place in the nineteenth century.

This chapter has argued that in several important respects, Hopkins is not a typical Victorian poet: on the whole his poetry is "dramatic", in the sense that its language, tones and rhythms are very close to the speaking voice, and one is aware that the poems are addressed to people

1. Poems, 32, p. 66.

2. " ... Hopkins's view of nature has much in it that goes back to early Romanticism ... ", Milroy, p. 71.

3. See for example, Poems, 2, p. 8.

in various ways. Furthermore, in contrast to the single voice which dominates much eighteenth and nineteenth century poetry (perhaps another consequence of Ramism, since, as Ong says, "The Ramist arts of discourse are monologue arts".[1]), Hopkins's poetry has a variety of voices,[2] and suggests a kind of debate or dialogue or drama, out of which interaction a more balanced and persuasive position is reached. His poetry is rarely abstract, musing or expansive, but rather aims at brevity and extreme density of expression, and abounds in images and metaphors which are vivid, concrete - often so unusual or strange as to startle the reader into new perceptions ("as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet! - "[3]). As we might expect of a poetry written for the voice and the ear, Hopkins uses alliteration, assonance, rhythm, and all forms of rhyme in patterns of intricate complexity, with corresponding subtleties of meaning and suggestion.[4] Hopkins's poems often have their meanings in the connections between the sounds of words, in rhythmic parallels and developments, in relations between images, in the external form, in the expanding significance of his compound words, coinages and metaphors. In short, he developed a kind of poetry which in combining a number of older traditions in English with some of the more contemporary developments, became not only unique in nineteenth century poetry but also occupies a unique place in all English literature. He seems on the one hand to be strangely anachronistic, and on the other to be as fresh and sparkling as though he were writing today. In the next chapter we will consider his theory of language as a fundamental reason for his development of this unusual poetry.

1. Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, p. 287.
2. This is a point I return to often, but see especially Chapt. 9.
3. Poems, 38, p. 70.
4. For an excellent discussion of this aspect of Hopkins's poetry, see Milroy, pp. 132-153.

CHAPTER 3

HOPKINS ON LANGUAGE: A STEM OF STRESS

Many aspects of Hopkins's poetic practice can be illuminated by ideas developed during and just after his years at Oxford: his time there was one of rapid and considerable intellectual growth, and much of his thinking of later years is already present, well formed and well articulated, in his undergraduate essays and notes, and in notes made soon after he left Oxford.[1] The importance of the early years will, I hope, be clear from the forays I make amongst these essays and notes from time to time, and perhaps especially in this chapter, which will be focused largely on two sets of notes made in 1868, one on language and one on Parmenides.[2] These notes contain some of the poet's speculations on the nature of language which were to mature over the next seven years before coming to fruition in The Wreck of the Deutschland, and they therefore require some consideration.

The language of Hopkins's poetry often has a curious duality about it: he seems on the one hand to use language in the way all of us use it, as an instrument for conveying what we mean, and on the other he appears to allow the language to generate meaning out of its own structures and patterns, and to impose its own unity on his experience, both of which aspects are well illustrated in these lines:

> As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
> As tumbled over rim in roundy wells

1. JP. pp. 4-130.
2. JP. pp. 125-126, 127-130.

Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;[1]

People do not often use or think of language in the way that Hopkins does here, and hence it is not always thought to have the capacity to do more than signify, nor to shape our thought so comprehensively; yet in these lines the syntax and the sounds of the words generate a multitude of relations and meanings (or manifest usually latent or concealed ones) in a way that draws attention to the relation between the intrinsic characteristics of the language and its meanings; further, Hopkins is able to develop a nice paradox in using language to describe (and imitate) the "language" of created things through a superb use of onomatopoeia. These explain why the poem is so luminous and rich - far beyond the paraphraseable sense of the lines. It is interesting that another poet, not far in time from Hopkins, found language has both a vulnerability and a strange independence:

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them.[2]

1. Poems, 57, p. 90.

2. T. S. Eliot, Burnt Norton, V, lines 13-19, London, Faber and Faber, 1941, p. 14.

The Janus-like character of language had been recognised quite early by Hopkins, and he probably owed this largely to the work of Max Müller. In The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins James Milroy argues persuasively that Hopkins had read Müller's work (probably by late 1864 at the latest), and that his own ideas on philology show clear signs of Müller's influence.[1] One of the more interesting aspects of Müller's view of language is that he saw it as a natural phenomenon, much like plants or animals, with its own laws and character,[2] and as a result he had an unusual view of linguistics:

> Müller's chief argument is that linguistics is what he calls a physical science, by which is meant that it has more in common with the study of geology or biology than it has with the humanities, such as the history of art, morals or religion. He insists on speaking of 'the growth of language in contradistinction to the history of language' (my italics). It is not in the power of man, he argues, to produce or prevent change in language; in an important sense, it is independent of man.[3]

Significantly, a few lines later Milroy adds:

> The idea that language study is part of what was then called natural history is by no means self-evident, nor has it ever been a particularly respectable view amongst professional language specialists. Max Müller was its chief exponent in the mid nineteenth century ...[4]

1. pp. 49-66.
2. cf. ibid., p. 87.
3. ibid., p. 51.
4. ibid.

Something of Müller's influence on Hopkins can be seen in remarks like the following, where he says in effect that the language has particular features or characteristics natural to it, and poetry should therefore use those as the basis for the laws of poetry and not have imposed on it an alien set of rules:

> Why do I employ sprung rhythm at all? Because it is the nearest to the rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining, as it seems to me, opposite and, one wd. have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm - that is rhythm's self - and naturalness of expression - ...[1]

One basic awareness which must therefore underlie this discussion is that Hopkins recognised language as being in a sense both servant and master: although he moulded language to make it mean what he wanted to convey, he was at the same time allowing the language to assert its authority by using and heightening into poetry its innate laws and characteristics.

In the first set of notes referred to above, Hopkins begins by considering the various attributes or elements, or "terms" a word possesses and concludes that it has three:

> A word then has three terms belonging to it, ὅροι ,[2] or moments - its prepossession of feeling; its definition, abstraction, vocal expression or other utterance; and its application, 'extension', the concrete things coming under it.[3]

1. LRB., p. 46.
2. Literally, "boundaries", "definitions"; transliterated, horoi.
3. JP., p. 125.

Of the first element Hopkins had written, "To every word meaning a thing and not a relation belongs a passion or prepossession or enthusiasm which it has the power of suggesting or producing but not always or in everyone".[1] He also calls it the "form" of the word, analogous to the soul; it "is not a word but something connotatively meant by it .... "[2] The third term, he says, "is not a word but the thing meant by it".[3] We might at first assume that Hopkins has defined the word's attributes in terms of the current (non-technical) meanings of "connotation" and "denotation", but this is only partly true. His idea of "denotation" coincides with ours, but his "connotation" is rather different. In the first instance, it is worth noting that "connotation" in Hopkins's sense refers to a "passion or prepossession or enthusiasm" - an emotional energy or power of some kind - and not to a further meaning in the word, which is distinguishable from any feelings a word may produce in us. For example, "eagle" denotes the members of a particular species of carnivorous bird, and connotes things like strength, fierceness, control, beauty, and so on; but Hopkins's "prepossession" embraces both the denotation and connotations of "eagle", and is thus integral with all the meanings a word has. In the second instance, "prepossession" in this sense was the first term Hopkins used to describe what he was soon to call "instress" - as subsequent discussion will argue[4] - and connotation with the modern meaning is not identical with instress at all, though instress is fully involved with the connotations of a word.

1. ibid.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. See pp. 74-78.

Thus the aura of feeling which surrounds a word, the emotional complex it possesses for or evokes in a person – for example, the feelings of distaste and fear or horror that "cancer" or "leprosy" evoke, or the mingled pity and revulsion that "mongol" does – are part of the instress of the word since it brings these feelings with it whether it is used literally or figuratively, but the instress, the unique identity or "being" of the word, is known through other factors as well – its sounds, rhythm, meanings, assocations, the images it may evoke, and its relations to its referents – and this brings us to Hopkins's middle term, the most crucial of the three.

After describing the three attributes of a word, Hopkins reveals that one of his main interests is to discover what a word really is:

> It is plain that of these [the three "terms"] only one in propriety is the word; the third is not the word but a thing meant by it, the first is not a word but something connotatively meant by it, the nature of which is further to be explored.[1]

However, as with the term "prepossession", he was evidently unhappy with his first attempt at defining what a word is, and he casts around for a more satisfactory formulation:

> But not even the whole field of the middle term is covered by the word. For the word is the expression, <u>uttering</u> of the idea in the mind. That idea itself has its two terms, the image (of sight or sound or scapes of the other senses), which is in fact physical and a refined energy* accenting the nerves, a word to oneself, an inchoate word, and secondly the conception.

1. <u>JP</u>., p. 125.

> * That is when deliberately formed or when a thought is recalled, for when produced by sensation from without or when as in dreams etc. it presents itself unbidden it comes from the involuntary working of nature.[1]

In Hopkins's view then, the word, as he qualifies it in this passage, "in propriety" is "the expression, uttering of the idea in the mind", and not its "definition, abstraction". There is some ambiguity here, since Hopkins does not make clear whether "uttering of the idea in the mind" means that the word is the vocal utterance of what is in the mind, or whether it is an "uttering" in the mind of the idea; however, since in his first definition of the middle term he used the phrase "vocal expression or utterance", and his second definition is a restriction of the first, we can I think assume that Hopkins is using "uttering" in a literal sense, though it seems as reasonable to argue that we can have in our minds a mental image (visual or aural) of the word which "utters" the idea. To prevent confusion about Hopkins's meaning here it is worth requoting Hopkins's remark that "To every word meaning a thing and not a relation belongs a passion or prepossession or enthusiasm which it has the power of suggesting or producing ..."; in view of the fact that in all his subsequent remarks Hopkins has in mind words that have this prepossession, the comments quoted above and on p.61 refer to words meaning things, and perhaps to concrete rather than abstract things, since Hopkins gives man as an example of a word meaning a thing.[2] This helps to explain why Hopkins belives the idea "uttered"

1. ibid.
2. ibid., cf. " ... its application, 'extension', the concrete things coming under it". ibid.

by the word is composed of two elements, a mental image of the thing the word denotes or a specific example from the class of things denoted by the word (which Hopkins felt to be the result of a physical energy acting on the nerves, and it is therefore a sensory experience of a kind, though not necessarily the same kind of experience we have when we see or hear the thing in question itself), and a conception, which I assume to be a generalised, abstracted non-imaged concept of the thing, and which applies to all members of the class the thing belongs to. This also means that Hopkins's concept of the "idea in the mind" must not be generally applied to all words; in some, perhaps many cases, he might have argued that it applied, but in others it would have been abundantly clear that no image was possible, and a different theory for the relation between idea and referent would have been necessary.

On the face of it Hopkins would seem to have held the rather simple idea that the word "in propriety" is a sound which "utters" the idea thus composed, that is, one assumes, the idea is communicated, expressed, realised, given presence or existence in the mind of the person addressed essentially by a sound which has a communally agreed meaning (or meanings) together with various assocations, overtones and emotional suggestions. Leaving aside the many objections which modern linguistic theory would advance against such a view, even contemporary thinking would have found it badly wanting. But Hopkins was no fool, and the oddness of the statement suggests that it is made on the basis of assumptions or considerations not given in these notes, and I would suggest there are three: firstly, he is speaking as a poet rather than a philosopher, and is more concerned with the creative uses and experience of language than with formulating a comprehensive theory of language; secondly, it seems reasonable to assume that Hopkins had in mind here the use of language specifically in its role as a means of communication, the significance of which is

only clear in the light of the third assumption, which is that he took spoken language to be the primary form of language. It is quite conceivable that if questioned Hopkins would have readily agreed that words have three forms - their sounds, their shapes on the page, and mental images of these - and that they are inextricably one with the meanings and overtones associated with them (which means that the word is a nexus of sound, shape, image and meaning), but he would have suggested that of the two main ways of communicating with language, speech and writing, speech is the original, the essential and primary form. Later arguments in this and the following chapter will offer reasons as to why Hopkins felt this, but it is important to stress at this point how strongly he believed speech to be the primary form of language. His Oxford diaries reveal his deep interest in language as sound, but beyond that they also reveal both the over-riding consciousness that language began as sound, and his fascination with the relations between a word's meaning and its sounds (and the origins, often onomatopoeic, of these relations), which, to judge from the notes in the diaries, seemed to him often to have a fitness or appropriateness to one another which was not coincidental. This general sense of the nature of language is also evident in later remarks like "Poetry is speech framed for the contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning"[1] and "This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; till it is spoken it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself".[2] Underlying both these statements is the idea that poetry is derived from and is a purged and quintessential

1. JP. p. 289. (1873/74)

2. TLS. 8 December 1972, p. 1511, column 3. (1885)

form of the spoken language, which is the "true" form of language.[1] Given these a priori assumptions, Hopkins's view that the word is "the expression, uttering of the idea in the mind" is more explicable, and must be seen as a special (and perhaps idiosyncratic) rationalisation which satisfied Hopkins's developing sense of the nature of language and poetry. As such it is more important for the way it affected his art than for its philosophical validity, and although its philosophical basis can be challenged, this does not necessarily affect our evaluation of the poetry, since that can be appraised on other grounds than those advanced by Hopkins in these notes. Thus, we must assume that for Hopkins there was a primary, vital connection between the sound of a word and its "idea", and furthermore (as later discussion will suggest), he felt the sound of a word was part of the total meaning it conveys, and is not simply a sign or symbol which stands for the meanings associated with it.[2] This point leads to another and important one, which is that we must not misconstrue Hopkins as saying that the word is simply the sound, as his phrasing may suggest. Although the sound of a word and its associated meanings (or "ideas" in Hopkins's terms) are logically distinguishable from one another, we do not hear or speak (or see or imagine) a word without experiencing the various elements it consists of as an inextricable unity. Moreover, as I noted a little earlier, Hopkins often perceived a fitness between a word's meaning and its sound. The reasons why Hopkins felt this appropriateness between sound and

1. cf. "As poetry is emphatically speech, speech purged of dross like gold in the furnace ...." ibid.

2. In view of this narrower definition of the word that Hopkins arrived at, it would appear that a word has four elements or "terms" belonging to it: its "prepossession", its "definition, abstraction", its "application, 'extension', the concrete things coming under it", and its sound.

meaning existed will be discussed later,[1] but for the present we can take this to be the harmonisation of the nature and characteristics of the idea with the nature and characteristics of the sound of the word as we experience it in speaking it. Some of the harmonisation will consist in the perception of analogies between the sound and the idea - for example, a short word with hard consonants may be used for an abrupt, violent action, as in "crack" - but for Hopkins the harmonisation extended beyond such onomatopoeic parallels to the point where the word expresses the idea in more complex and generalised terms - specifically through learned synaesthetic and phonaesthetic associations between words and their meanings.[2]

Another important point to note here is how far Hopkins's sense of the physiological basis for his experience of language extends. He evidently believed that the "conception" is, so to speak, flanked by two sensory experiences, the sound of the word, and the image of the thing denoted by the word, which as I mentioned earlier, he felt to be a sensory experience of a kind. Unlike the relationship between the sound of a word and its idea, in which the presentation of the word's sound (or its shape) immediately evokes the idea in the mind (not necessarily the other way around of course), it seems that Hopkins felt the mental image does not necessarily present itself spontaneously to the mind when we hear or see a word or have an idea in our minds, but rather is something which we deliberately, actively create: "That is when deliberately formed or when a thought is recalled, for when produced by sensation from without or when as in dreams etc. it presents itself

1. See pp. 70-71, 81-85.

2. See pp. 67-75.

unbidden it comes from the involuntary working of nature".[1] Hopkins is therefore trying to ensure with regard to himself at least (though this is a practice we can usefully bring to his poetry) that the sound of a word, and the conception and image it evokes are experienced as a single thing, and that as a result the experience is as vivid and telling as possible. It is significant that Hopkins calls the image "a word to oneself, an inchoate word". The relation is literal as well as metaphorical, since in their physicality image and word have similar natures; the latter is the public communication of the idea, the former a private one. Hopkins would quickly have perceived how important this was to the poetic use of language: if the auditory image of the word is fused with the conception and image of the idea, he could be sure that the utterance of words would evoke the conceptions and their accompanying images. What the speaker experiences may not be the same as what the poet experienced, but if the language is used precisely enough the experience communicated through the words will be close to the original. But important as it is to ensure accuracy in the language, it is equally important that what the reader experiences is as full and as vivid as possible, and in this regard Hopkins would seem to be assuming that some of our experience of language entails a kind of learned synaesthesia. When we learn our mother-tongue, we begin by learning that certain people and objects can be signified by different sounds; later, feelings and other more abstract experiences or concepts are also identified with sounds, and by their nature these are less likely to have sensory images associated with them, but in the case of concrete reality we are inevitably going to have an image of the thing denoted by the word in our minds. Even in those cases when we have not experienced

1. JP. p. 125.

a thing at first hand there is a likelihood that our past experience of similar things will enable us to derive some images of it. However, when we do experience something for ourselves for the first time and we know the word for it, the concepts, and perhaps vague images we have had, are enriched by an abundance of vivid sense impressions, feelings, concepts and usually a stronger conceptual understanding. When we are sensitive to the sounds of words and the relationships that exist between word, referent and idea, the sounds of the words can, and will if we allow them to, become so fully interfused with the feelings, concepts and images of an idea that not only will speaking or hearing a word evoke a great number of them, but the nexus of elements centering on the thing in question will become resonant with significance and evocative personal associations. The images associated with a word may involve the sense of hearing or some sense of muscular movement analogous to the effort needed to speak the word, but in most cases the senses involved will be in addition to, or other than those associated with speech. Since spontaneous synaesthesia exists it should not surprise us that our brains and nervous systems are capable of learning synaesthetic responses which have all the vividness and apparent spontaneity of synaesthesia proper. In view of these remarks, it is also not surprising that Hopkins's poetry should possess the quality so immediately apparent and so often commented on - a vivid, at times excessive, sense of concreteness and physicality, with images crowding in on one another, and thick with words describing texture, colour, feel and motion.

Before I give an illustration, another observation should be made: because a poet uses language in a particularly complex and potent way, creating unusual combinations of words as he seeks to communicate his particular perceptions, ideas, feelings, and so on, he reorganizes the conceptions and images the words evoke in his reader into new combinations,

and as a result the poetry may have an extraordinary freshness and vividness for the reader. Both this and earlier points are illustrated in the following lines from Hopkins's "The Woodlark", where the richness of the imagery is partly due to the synaesthetic processes I have been describing, and reinforced by the complex patterns of sound, which are auditory images made to "rhyme"[1] with the images in the other senses:

> To-day the sky is two and two
> With white strokes and strains of the blue.
> The blue wheat-acre is underneath
> And the corn is corded and shoulders its sheaf,
> The ear in milk, lush the sash,
> And crush-silk poppies aflash,
> The blood-gush blade-gash
> Flame-rash rudred
> Bud shelling or broad-shed
> Tatter-tangled and dingle-a-danglèd
> Dandy-hung dainty head.[2]

Another point which should be made in this context is that since for Hopkins the primary form of the word is not the shape of symbols on a page, or even the "sound" our inner ear supplies in silent reading (and we must remember that often no "sound" is present in silent reading at all), but the spoken word, he placed considerable emphasis on onomatopoeia and phonaesthesia. Phonaesthesia, or sound-symbolism includes onomatopoeia as a special case of phonaesthesia, since in both cases the sounds of the words bear a conventionalised relation to the actions of things they refer to, but in onomatopoeia the sounds of the words do try to imitate the sounds of their referents. Before discussing

1. JP. p. 83.
2. Poems, 138, p. 177.

Hopkins's views on these matters, it is needful that we define what we mean by phonaesthesia, and for this I turn to James Milroy, whose quotations and illustrations give a good idea of what it is:

> Jespersen argued that particular sound-combinations are expressive of movement, state of mind, size, distance and other relations ...'a short vowel, suddenly interrupted by a stopped consonant, serves to express the sound produced by a very rapid striking movement (*pat*, *tap*, *knock*, etc) ...' Jespersen's series of *fl-* words, also thought to be expressive of movement, is like Hopkins's: '*flow*, *flag* ... *flake*, *flutter*, *fling*, *flit*, *flurry*, *flirt* ...', ...
>
> * * *
>
> To emphasize the fact that word associations of a phonaesthetic kind are taken seriously by modern scholars, we may refer to the British linguist, the late J.R. Firth, who uses the word phonaestheme for the associative sequences *sl-*, *sm-* and others. Firth claims that the phonetic habits imposed on us by the language we speak cause us to associate such series as *slack*, *slouch*, *slush*, *sludge*, *slime*, *slosh*, *slash*, *sloppy*, *slug* ... *slum*, *slump*, *slobber* and others, all with a pejorative meaning .... Firth ... further remarks that other groups of words 'having common phonetic characteristics are linked by similar "settings" and have an associated kinaesthetic background'. He suggests that 'stresses and strains, strength, straight or stretched-out things might be associated in a common motor background', and he lists: *stripe*, *stride*, *strive*, *struggle*, *strange*, *streak*, *stream*, *strike*, *string*, and others.[1]
>
> ... modern linguistic scholars take perfectly seriously the idea of *phonaesthesia*, ... they do agree that, within particular languages, certain phonetic structures

1. Milroy, pp. 66-67.

> may carry sense associations of various kinds ... The experiments described by Roger Brown[1] establish that people do tend to associate back vowels and open front vowels (e.g. u as in doom, o as in road, a as in dance, bad) with magnitude, and the other front vowels with smallness. Thus a roll is 'large' and a reel relatively 'small' ..., doom is a 'large' word, fate a 'small' one. Similarly, consonants can be arranged along a scale of relative 'brightness'; voiceless consonants are 'brighter' than voiced, and of the voiced consonants dental-alveolars (d) are 'darkest', labials less 'dark' and palatal-velars (g as in get) least 'dark'. Plainly, on this scale doom is a 'dark' word whereas fate is 'bright'.[2]

Hopkins's interest in phonaesthesia probably began as a curiosity about onomatopoeia's role in the derivations of words, and this appears early in his Oxford diaries. His lists of words reveal a spontaneous yet conscious awareness of the onomatopoeia of words; in most cases the lists contain words similar in sounds, some of which are similar in meaning or in their connotations, while others are apparently unrelated, but Hopkins often manages to relate the words, even the seemingly unconnected ones, back to a core sound,[3] frequently onomatopoeic:

> Grind, gride, gird, grit, groat, grate, greet, κρούειν,[4] crush, crash, κροτεῖν[5] etc.
>
> Original meaning to strike, rub, particularly together. That which is produced by such means is the grit, the groats or crumbs, like fragmentum from frangere,

1. Words and Things, New York, 1958.
2. Milroy, p. 157.
3. JP. p. 4.
4. Literally, "to bang" or "knock together"; transliterated, krouein.
5. Literally "to strike, hit, bang together"; transliterated, krotein.

> bit, from bite. Crumb, crumble perhaps akin. To greet, to strike the hands together(?). Greet, grief, wearing, tribulation. Grief possibly connected. Gruff, with a sound as of two things rubbing together. I believe these words to be onomatopoetic. Gr common to them all representing a particular sound. In fact I think the onomatopoetic theory has not had a fair chance. Cf. Crack, creak, croak, crake, graculus, crackle. These must be onomatopoetic.
>
> Crook, crank, kranke, crick, cranky. Original meaning crooked, not straight or right, wrong, awry.[1]

For a number of words, the onomatopoetic theory holds true,[2] and Hopkins must have known he was on firm ground. But if it was granted that the sounds of words imitate the sounds of objects or actions, it was not a long step to the more generalised idea of phonaesthesia, and the following notes from later in the Oxford diaries show Hopkins having arrived at this conclusion:

> Pregnant phrases in English. Putting the stone - The good ship - To put things, i.e. to represent them.[3]
>
> Altogether peak is a good word. For sunlight through shutter, locks of hair, rays in brass knobs etc. Meadows peaked with flowers.[4]

1. JP. p. 5, (late 1863). See also, ibid. pp. 7, 8, 9, 11, 12.
2. See ibid. pp. 504-505.
3. ibid. p. 19.
4. ibid. p. 47.

In both these cases the appeal the words have for Hopkins is largely the way the physical characteristics of the sounds of the words reflect the idea. In the first instance, the suggestion of forceful or muscular expression Hopkins finds in "To put things" is due to the short vowel sound flanked by strong voiceless consonants, and he clearly liked the way the sound of the word mirrored the emphasis implied in "putting things". Much the same is true for "peak", with its "bright" consonants and vowel, and the hard, clean edge of the "k" sound, all of which support the idea of something with a fine, pointed outline, usually upright. It is significant that all Hopkins's illustrations of "peak" are connected with light in one way or another, the result probably of his acute sensitivity to the sound-sense associations of phonaesthemes.

Phonaesthesia may owe its existence to onomatopoeia, since it is likely that in the process of developing a language certain sounds in onomatopoeic words become associated with certain meanings (as Hopkins suggests in the quotations above), and gradually particular sounds develop a significance in themselves, as Hopkins's Gr and cr - k do. Thereafter, new words can be coined which exploit the meanings attached to various sounds, but these may be far from the original onomatopoeic associations. At the same time, because language also grows by metaphorical transfer, a number of onomatopoeic words may be applied in a metaphorical sense for so long that the literal sense is lost, but the words preserve their sound-sense associations in a looser way, drawing as they do on the complicated system of phonaesthemes a language develops as a result of these sorts of processes. It is on this basis that a poet is able to coin the most evocative words, as Hopkins sometimes does, knowing that certain sounds or patterns of sounds have particular associations for a reader which he can creatively exploit. An excellent example is Hopkins's "sloggering" in stanza 19 of The Wreck of the

Deutschland, about which Milroy makes the following remarks:

> Commentators have generally taken the dominant sense of slogger to be 'to strike hard, assail with blows' (R. V. Schoder). Norman MacKenzie says that 'sloggering' is the colloquial term for the action of a prize-fighter raining blows on his opponent: behind it lies the dialect "slog: to strike with great force". The etymological dictionaries recognize slog: to hit hard, to plod (Onions) but slogger is taken as an agent-noun: 'one who slogs' (Partridge). I have found no justification for slogger as a verb meaning to slog. Wright's EDD recognizes a Northern dialect verb slogger: to hang loosely and untidily - of clothes - and sloggering (adj.): loosely-fitting, slovenly; untidy, loosely-built.' Wright also records many dialect words of related sound and meaning: slocher in Scotland means: to labour under asthma; take liquid food in a slabbering manner; wallow in mud ... In some areas slidder may mean to slide or slip; slobber can be a noun meaning mud, cold rain mixed with snow, sloppy sleet; slagger can mean to besmear with mud, bespatter, bedaub, slodder to spill, splash, slubber to drink with a gurgling noise, or (as a noun) mud, slush. ... Hopkins's coining is meant to suggest the sound of the breakers dashing against the ship and then draining back with a sucking, gurgling noise.[1]

The richness of the associations Hopkins draws on sometimes is quite considerable, as Milroy so clearly reveals here, and it is important to develop an awareness of this aspect of his poetic practice. However, it does not exclude another possibility in the relations between sound and sense, namely that the sounds of a word seem to reflect the characteristics of its referent simply because a person has developed a strong,

1. pp. 177-178.

private association between the word's sound and its meaning. The associations may not be so resonant in this case, but in both instances a significant relation is felt to exist between the sounds of the words and what they point to. Hopkins's poetry clearly manifests a very strong sense of the unity existing between a word's sound and its meaning, and of the synaesthetic and phonaesthetic associations in the language - features which go a long way in explaining why he insisted his poetry should be read aloud: the sounds of the words have much richer and more extended relations to their meanings than they do in normal language usage, and as a result the words' referents are much more vividly realised.

Once Hopkins had arrived at a general idea of sound-symbolism it was a short step for him from there to the position of the notes of 1868, where still more inclusive ideas about the relations between words and their referents were explored. In the process, the poet developed the terms "instress" and "inscape", which appear for the first time in the notes on Parmenides. It would be more than interesting if Hopkins's feelings about language led him to these terms - certainly as John Robinson remarks, the notes just before those on Parmenides show him in need of a term like "instress"[1] - but it is more likely that Hopkins's developing way of perceiving things (including language) led him to coin "instress" and "inscape". It is however as important to observe that the notes preceding those on Parmenides reveal Hopkins in need of a term like "inscape" as well, for in the paragraphs following those considered so far, he turns his attention to the relation between the mind and what it studies or contemplates, especially the complex unity existing in works

1. In Extremity, p. 34.

of art. He first distinguishes two kinds of energy that the mind has, a sequential, "transitional kind",[1] as in reasoning or reading, and an "abiding kind",[2] "in which the mind is absorbed (as far as that may be), taken up by, dwells upon, enjoys, a single thought: we may call it contemplation ... "[3] "Art", he goes on, "extracts this energy of contemplation but also the other one,"[4] the reason being that since a work of art is a unity, whether it is spatial (as in painting) or successive (as in music), it will lead to the "contemplating" energy of the mind, even though a successive art also requires the "transitional" energy, and is therefore a unity of a different order. A few paragraphs later Hopkins writes:

> The further in anything, as a work of art, the organisation is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter, the more effort will be required in apprehension, the more power of comparison, the more capacity for receiving that synthesis of (either successive or spatially distinct) impressions which gives us the unity with the prepossession conveyed by it.[5]

Here one can see clearly Hopkins's sense that a vital relation existed between the prepossession and the unity of the work: his phrasing suggests that the prepossession, in flushing the matter (and the form in penetrating it), so works on the material of the work, be it words, or paints, or notes, that all the elements are synthesized into a single,

1. JP. p. 125.
2. ibid.
3. ibid., pp. 125-126.
4. ibid., p. 126.
5. ibid.

resonant object. In achieving this, the work conveys not only the sense of unity but also the prepossession which is the source and aim of art. (There are hints here of an impersonal theory of art in that the form and prepossession are thought of as independent of the artist, whose business it is to translate these quintessential qualities in his subject matter into his art without interference from himself - an issue we must return to later.)[1]

Phrases in this paragraph are picked up in the notes on Parmenides in passages where "instress" and "inscape" are used for the first time, and the two sets of notes show how the concepts Hopkins was feeling his way towards in the first set were realized in the second:

> His [Parmenides'] feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape is most striking ...[2]

The word "flush" points to the phrase "the prepossession flushes the matter" in the earlier notes, while "foredrawn" echoes "prepossession", and these points of contact reveal that what Hopkins had in mind when he thought of prepossession "flushing" a work of art, or of the prepossession of a word, was its "instress", its inner energy of being creating in its outward form a unique pattern or design, an ordering from an inward imperative which is perceptible by the senses. This is "inscape", what he had earlier felt his way towards in the kind of unity which draws forth from the mind the rapt "energy of contemplation", and which consists in "that synthesis of (either successive or spatially

1. See pp. 88-89.

2. JP. p. 127.

distinct) impressions which gives us the unity with the prepossession conveyed by it."[1] The significance of these concepts to Hopkins's poetry is of course considerable, and I would like to consider some of the ramifications of these developments in his thinking, but before I do so some precautionary remarks are in order. The terms "instress" and "inscape" are necessarily used quite often by Hopkins's critics, but we need to be cautious in our use of them. It is questionable how much of a help they are in explaining the poetry - certainly other approaches are as valid and often more helpful - but they are a great help insofar as they illuminate the kind of connections and rationalisations Hopkins was making, and hence the way his theorising bears on his poetry, although the relation between poetry and theory may not be what Hopkins imagined. Hence the following discussion is intended to point up various theoretical assumptions which help explain why he conceived of his poetry in the way he did, but not necessarily to explain the poetry by means of those assumptions.[2]

Most of Hopkins's comments on the Parmenidean fragments are concerned with the concept of universal Being, though it is interesting to observe that his remarks are based on a mistranslation of the Greek, and what is translated as Being in the following passage should be "What is"[3];

1. The following definition of inscape is one of the more satisfying ones: "... it is clear that the prefix 'in' of 'inscape' denotes that 'scape' is the outer fixed shape of the intrinsic form of a thing. For that reason Hopkins was not satisfied with the terms design and pattern as the unqualified designation of the intrinsic order of being. These terms indicate an order impressed from without, an extrinsic principle of unity". David A. Downes, Gerard Manley Hopkins, A Study of His Ignatian Spirit, New York, 1959, p. 166. Quoted by John Robinson, op. cit. p. 35.

2. For an examination of this from a different point of view, see J. Robinson, op. cit., Chapt. 2, where he argues that it enabled Hopkins to find the ideal in the real.

3. JP. p. 344.

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3. JP. p. 344.

> His /Parmenides/ great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-Being is not - which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it.[1]

Judging from Hopkins's remarks here it seems likely that Parmenides confirmed his own sense of things, although it is difficult to determine how far theological convictions are playing a part here, since there is no explicit reference to any Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, Parmenides may have provided some (apparent) confirmation for what Hopkins was arriving at either independently, or from religious assumptions, or both. Of some importance to Hopkins was the idea that Being is the same wherever it occurs, or is "univocal",[2] to use the technical term: "It cannot be greater or less in one place than in another, he /Parmenides/ says ...".[3] Because Being is univocal, man is able to recognize and respond to Being in things other than himself.

> But indeed I have often felt when I have been in this mood and felt the depth of an instress or how fast the inscape holds a thing that nothing is so pregnant and straight-forward to the truth as simple yes and is. 'Thou couldst never either know or say / what was not, there would be no coming at it.' There would be no

1. JP. p. 127. A similar argument can be put forward about the prefix "in" of "instress": it is Being in matter pressing against its constraints: "Fineness, proportion, of feature comes from a moulding force which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistence of cumbersome or restraining matter; ...," FL, p. 306, cf. JP, p. 203.

2. Robinson, op. cit, p. 32. See also J. Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God, Chapt. 6. (New York, Schocken Books, 1965).

> bridge, no stem of stress between us and things to bear us out and carry the mind over ...[1]

Thus Being, or instress, in man, in creatures or natural objects, in works of art, creates a bridge of "stress" or energy springing from both sides as it were, to convey the mind out of itself to grasp fully what man observes. Even though the forms of things may differ, Being is the same within each form, and therefore Being is able to recognize Being through the form or "inscape", which for Hopkins revealed the presence of "instress".

One of the more important consequences of this theory of universal Being that Hopkins fastened on is that man is able to <u>know</u> and be sure of what he knows:

> There would be no bridge, no stem of stress between us and things to bear us out and carry the mind over: without stress we might not and could not say / Blood is red / but only / This blood is red / or / The last blood I saw was red / nor even that, for in later language not only universals would not be true but the copula would break down even in particular judgements.[2]

Hopkins seems to suggest that there are two closely related factors which enable man to arrive at certain knowledge: one, the univocality of Being, has been touched on; the other is that Being is independent of matter and utterly unique to each thing;

1. ibid, p. 127.
2. ibid.

> ... and Parmenides will say that the mind's grasp - νοεῖν,[1] the foredrawing act - that this is blood or that blood is red is to be looked for in Being, the foredrawn, alone, not in the thing we named blood or the blood we worded as red.[2]

Inextricably tied up with the questions of Being and knowledge is that of language, and Hopkins seeks in these notes an explanation which can satisfactorily account for the relation between a word's sound, its idea in the mind, and its referent:

> To be and to know or Being and thought are the same. The truth in thought is Being, stress, and each word is one way of acknowledging Being and each sentence by its copula is (or its equivalent) the utterance and assertion of it.[3]

The thought here is fairly dense and elliptical, and we have to work out the path that leads to the idea that language is an acknowledgement and assertion of Being. What follows is a rough outline of what I believe underlies Hopkins's words in this passage.

All things have Being, and we know that something is, and has particular attributes, through "the mind's grasp - νοεῖν, the fore-drawing act" (that is, the mind's perception of instress), which is itself

1. Literally, "to grasp, to perceive with the mind, to think"; transliterated noein.
2. ibid. p. 129. My underlining.
3. ibid.

possible because of our own Being.[1] Further, thought and knowledge come through our senses or involve them in some way[2]; the presentment to the mind of an idea evokes a conception and may (either automatically or because we choose to) evoke a mental image as well, and these are in the mind as a result of an earlier experience involving some or all of our senses and other faculties, as noted earlier. Most important though, in the act of "foredrawing" or laying hold of the instress in anything, the mind is itself laid hold of by the Being of what it observes: "the truth in thought is Being, stress"; Being has a vital energy or force[3] that impinges on or "instresses" the mind with the "stress" of Being;[4] in making so telling an impact Being forms a correlative of itself in the mind in the shape of an idea which has a vivid, direct hold on reality, and is "flushed" with the living power or vitality of what was perceived.

The final link in the chain is language. Hopkins simply adds that "each word is one way of acknowledging Being and each sentence by its copula is (or its equivalent) the utterance and assertion of it", which seems at first to say merely that language exists as a means of communicating in a rough way the fact of Being. There is however a little more

1. GMH's translation of a fragment a little earlier in the notes reads, "Look at it, though absent, yet to the mind's eye as fast present here; for absence cannot break off Being from its hold on Being ..." ibid. p. 128.

2. cf. the part of the quotation on p. 62 marked *.

3. cf. the quotation on p. 62 and the discussion on p. 76 of the two kinds of energy the mind has.

4. See The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 5, Poems, p. 53.

to it. The passage just quoted makes an interesting distinction between the word and the sentence: the former is "one way of acknowledging Being", while the latter is "the utterance and assertion of it". The distinction is important, because it reveals Hopkins's recognition of one of the problems, and beauties, of language, and hints at the solution he found. The issue centres on the fact that the individual word has an unspecific, generalised meaning; it can only acknowledge the existence of something in a general way, like "blood" or "redness", to use Hopkins's illustrations, since the words alone give no more than an unlocated, generalised conception abstracted from our ideas and lacking the individualised Oneness, the specificity of Being.[1] The beauty of this is that we can move words with the utmost ease and flexibility amongst our ideas, but the problem is that words by themselves are then unable to be specific and precise: they lack the means for conveying or capturing "instress" which is completely unique to each individual thing, though the members of a species may share something of the same instress. The only exceptions are proper names but even these are inadequate: "London", for example, can say both a great deal and very little, and the writer's problem is to ensure that it conveys something, but only what he wants it to convey. The solution is of course to combine words in such a way that together they can convey exactly the individual characteristics and identity of whatever it is one is describing. When this is achieved, the combination of words (which will include or imply the copula) is not simply an "acknowledgement" but "the utterance and assertion" of Being.

1. JP. p. 130.

In the light of the earlier comments on Hopkins's concept that the word is the "uttering of the idea in the mind",[1] the word "utterance" in the passage under discussion becomes a particularly loaded one. There is a sense in which all things in nature "utter" themselves, communicating by means of a multitude of forms, colours, textures and activities their peculiar natures, and for Hopkins these outward, physical, perceptible things signified the presence of an inward invisible moulding power. The metaphor of speech in such a use of "utter" was something Hopkins adopted to wonderful effect a few years later:

> As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
> As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
> Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
> Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
>
> Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves - goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
> Crying What I do is me: for that I came.[2]

In a similar way spoken words (rather than written or mentally conceived ones) are the outward, physical communication of the invisible idea, a literal uttering of what our minds have grasped. Hopkins's preference for spoken language is made more explicable in this context; for one thing, spoken language is energised, it has a power and forcefulness similar in several respects to the energetic "communications" of things in the natural world, and in being similar in this way, spoken language is

1. See p. 61.

2. Poems, 57, p. 90.

able to convey the idea of what is described with exactness (through tone and rhythm) and something of the pressure and concreteness of the real things. A second point is that speech invests language with a living quality, and this again is paralleled by things in nature, which, as noted on page 82, have a vitality or living presence which impresses their identities on us. In possessing its own living power, speech is able (by an analogous relationship our minds perhaps grasp intuitively or subliminally rather that consciously) to convey more vividly the "aliveness" of what is being described.

These remarks are made all the more significant in view of Hopkins's application of the terms "instress" and "inscape" to art. It seems to me that by these terms Hopkins sought to give a rational explanation to three qualities in particular which he perceived in the world around him: first, the intricate and beautiful order or pattern which everything natural possesses or falls into if left to itself;[1] second, the qualities just mentioned, the energy and living presence of natural things, and lastly, their unity. In applying these terms to art (let us say specifically to poetry) Hopkins was requiring poetry to manifest the same three attributes. He was also implying that words have, in themselves, instress and inscape, that is, they have an outward order of sounds (or shapes), and an inward idea or meaning. This brings us back to the point made at the beginning of this chapter, that language has a dual nature - is servant and master. Insofar as it is servant we can make it mean what we want it to mean, but insofar as it is master, it can work against what we intend to convey, implying meanings we do not intend or falsifying what we do mean. Furthermore, because language has its own intrinsic

1. JP, p. 230.

character composed of sounds (often in typical combinations), rhythms, and characteristic intonations, the poet is in a position either to reinforce meaning by various devices or to have these characteristics of language detract from his meaning by, for example, infelicitous contrasts between the movement and tempo of the rhythm and the action of what is being described or the feelings conveyed in the utterance, or the use of harsh, strong consonants where gentle, soft, or quiet connotations are implied in the sense. In some cases of course, the utterance is neither enhanced nor detracted from by these qualities in the language. However, if poetry is to possess and communicate unity, order, energy, and a living power, the independence of language must be overcome and made to serve these ends, Hopkins was therefore committed to harnessing all the powers of language, so that as a linguistic structure in sound and rhythm and as a communication of meaning, the poem was a unified, "living", artefact. Some examination of how Hopkins felt this was achieved is therefore in order here.

The independence of words consists in three things: their "instress" and "inscape"; the fact that their meanings are unspecific and abstracted; and the fact that they belong to a community, and as a result their meanings are conventional and moving in time. Most language use attempts to limit the side-effects of this independence by being precise, logical, unambiguous; poetry on the other hand often exploits the independence of language in various ways, sometimes by allowing the language to communicate on its own terms (as Hopkins does), sometimes by mastering the language even where it appears to assert its independence most. The crucial point is that in spite of its independence in the ways noted above, language is also malleable, vulnerable, its elements capable of being combined in a virtually infinite number of ways. Given this, and the fact that language can also be expanded by the creation of new words and

new uses for old words, it is possible to make language take on and express unique forms, which was exactly what Hopkins required of language. For him this was achieved by means of poetic inspiration, which as he expresses it, seems to be an impersonal theory of poetic creation:

> I think then the language of verse may be divided into three kinds, the first and highest is poetry proper, the language of inspiration. The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or to strike into it unasked.
>
> * * *
>
> The second kind I call Parnassian. .... It is spoken on and from the level of the poet's mind, not, as in the other case, when the inspiration which is the gift of genius, raises him above himself.[1]

These ideas are also expressed in the slightly different terms of the notes discussed in the first part of this chapter:

> The further in anything, as a work of art, the organisation is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter, the more effort will be required in apprehension, the more power of comparison, the more capacity for receiving that synthesis of (either successive or spatially distinct) impressions which gives us the unity with the prepossession conveyed by it.[2]

1. FL. p. 216.

2. JP. p. 126. My underlining.

For Hopkins then, the process of poetic creation begins with a period of heightened and very acute awareness on the part of the poet; in this mood, the ideas formed from within the mind or generated from without by the pressure through the senses of what the poet observes, lay hold of the words, so to speak, and organise them into an utterance which is completely unique and expresses exactly what has been seen and thought and felt, since the poet in this state is concerned to express faithfully only what he saw and thought and not what he feels he ought to be seeing or thinking or feeling,[1] for whatever reason; he is raised above himself, and is not intent on expressing himself. For Hopkins there was one further dimension, that the language be uttered aloud. I mentioned earlier two reasons why he favoured the spoken word, and there is another closely connected one. Since language is pre-eminently a matter of sounds, rhythms, tones, and accents as far as Hopkins was concerned, the poet working under the pressure of inspiration will find that he is exploiting the various sound-sense relationships present in the language and recreating the words into rhythms and patterns of sound which are both more evocative, and more faithful to the images and meanings he intended to convey. In this way the language will project in its meaning and in its own characteristic features the "instress" and "inscape" (in the full meanings of the terms as Hopkins used them) of what the poet is describing, and at the same time will generate in its

1. cf. the following remarks by Ted Hughes; "That one thing is, imagine what you are writing about. See it and live it. Do not think it up laboriously, as if you were working out mental arithmetic. Just look at it, touch it, smell it, listen to it, turn yourself into it. When you do this, the words look after themselves, like magic", Poetry in the Making, London, Faber and Faber, 1967. p. 18.

own "instress" and "inscape" an order and beauty to be valued for themselves,[1] Thus Hopkins would argue that poetic language has a much firmer, more vivid and direct hold on what it is attempting to describe, and further, in order to fulfil the nature of language and to give the poem a living power, it must be uttered aloud; in this way language is given "a stem of stress"[2] by which the meaning is communicated vividly and forcefully to the reader or hearer.

The important consideration in this context is that although the poet in creating a poem takes the individual words, and by the force of his inspiration fuses their unique natures and characteristics into a new and far more complex order which is ideally a "stem of stress" for the meaning to pass along, the language nevertheless continues to assert its own nature: apart from the way it shapes the thought, a language's sounds, rhythms, structures and modes give an unavoidable character to the poetry, however much a poet like Hopkins reworks the language into new forms.[3] The poem is therefore the meeting place for three very different things - the ideas and "scapes" of what it describes, the mind and sensibility of the poet, and the innate character of language itself - and yet the poem, as Hopkins stresses, must be a unity. The danger is that these different elements will pull apart

1. See pp. 90-91 for comment on this idea.

2. JP. p. 127.

3. For extended commentary on this aspect of Hopkins, see F. R. Leavis, "Gerard Manley Hopkins", from New Bearings in English Poetry, reprinted in Hopkins, A Collection of Critical Essays, (Ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman), Englewood Cliffs N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1966, pp. 17-36; John Robinson, op. cit., Chapt. 3; and Gweneth Lilly, "The Welsh Influence in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins", Modern Language Review, Vol. 38, No. 3, July 1943, pp. 192-205.

from one another, and the poem's energies will be broken up and dissipated. In late 1873 or in the first half of 1874 Hopkins wrote that,

> Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake.[1]

Poetry written with this approach in mind can suffer from the dislocation mentioned above, as the last line in the following quotation reveals:

> The moon, dwindled and thinned to the fringe | of a fingernail held to the candle,
> Or paring of paradisaïcal fruit, | lovely in waning but lustreless,
> Stepped from the 'stool, drew back from the barrow, | of dark Maenefa the mountain;
> A cusp still clasped him, a fluke yet fanged him, | entangled him, not quit utterly.[2]

For the most part the control and power of these lines is impressive, but in the last line there is a growing sense that the sound patterns are developed too much for their own sake, and as a result the idea is overworked.[3] More important though is the way the union of sound and sense is disturbed and the mind is made to move in diverging paths, with one part following the patterns of sound merely as pleasing sounds, and

1. JP. p. 289; cf. ibid. p. 267.
2. Poems, 137, p. 176.
3. See Robinson pp. 55-56.

the other following the meaning, which in this instance becomes repetitive. On the other hand, poetry written as a "figure of spoken sound"[1] legitimises enjoyment of it simply as a design in sound, though this is not our general experience; great though our pleasure is in the musicality of Hopkins's poems, a greater pleasure comes from the fusion of the three levels of organisation we have briefly considered, each working in their own ways towards the same end, each lit up by the other:[2]

> Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles,
> beats earth bare
> Of yestertempest's creases; | in pool and rutpeel parches
> Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches,
> starches
> Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there
> Footfretted in it. Million-fuelèd, | nature's bonfire burns
> on.[3]

Once we have made allowances for the very different elements which go into the making of a poem, and which, as I have suggested, are welded into a deep and complex unity in a successful work, we can make a necessary distinction between two ways in which poetic language communicates its meaning. One is what may be called the analogical way, in which the reader perceives that certain characteristics of the language - its rhythms, or sounds, or even rhymes, for example - are <u>like</u> aspects of

1. <u>JP</u>. p. 267.

2. This idea, with rather less stress on its importance, is part of Miss Lilly's argument, which she supports from Leavis's work, and I owe its development here to them. See in Miss Lilly's case, op. cit. pp. 204-205, and in Leavis's, op. cit., p. 26.

3. <u>Poems</u>, 72, p. 105.

what the poem is communicating; by this perception of resemblances the reader's sense of vividness and accuracy in the poem's meaning is strengthened, especially when, as in Hopkins's case, he is asked to enact in his own body as fully as possible the various ways in which the poem imitates in its own terms what it describes. And secondly, in view of the arguments advanced in this chapter, Hopkins would add that poetic language has a real hold on what it describes, since under the pressure of poetic inspiration the poet is able to organise his language into so complex and resonant a form that what he has seen and thought and felt is communicated with a precision and vividness not possible in ordinary language. The capacity of language to realise both what man conceives and what he sees - particularly in the natural world - Hopkins would have found especially significant as a Catholic, because as the pinnacle of the visible creation it is man's purpose to use his language in the service and praise of God and part of this purpose is to speak on behalf of the creation:

> And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
> Else, but in dear and dogged man?[1]

The juxtaposition of two passages provides a useful conclusion to this chapter in that it crystallises some of the key aspects of Hopkins's theory of language and points forward to his ideas on the purpose of poetry:

> Hopkins therefore was a strict Classicist in his conception of words as tools rather than pigments; yet

1. Poems, 58, p. 90.

> he did not ignore their connotative value. The strength of his diction (as, again, of Shakespeare's, of Donne's) lies in his power of preserving the organic unity of definition and prepossession, of writing poetry which is at once precise in statement and aglow with individual and universal feeling.[1]

> Essential in Hopkins's difference from the other adherents to Beauty is his being more concerned to celebrate the beauty he encountered than to create beauty himself. His stress on definition rather than suggestion is another aspect of this, for his aim is not to evoke a beautiful feeling but to present the beautiful thing, which should then provoke the response due to it ... as a creation of God.[2]

1. Gardner, Vol. 1, pp. 112-113. The passage from which Gardner derives this conclusion is worth quoting; "But some minds prefer that the prepossession they are to receive should be conveyed by the least organic, expressive, by the most suggestive, way. By this means the prepossession and the definition, uttering, are distinguished and unwound, which is the less sane attitude", JP. p. 126.

2. Francis Noel Lees, Gerard Manley Hopkins, New York, Columbia University Press, 1966, pp. 36-37. (Columbia Essays on Modern Writers, No. 21).

CHAPTER 4

"Made for Performance"

> Of this long sonnet above all remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance and that its performance is not reading with the eye but loud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on.[1]

In Chapter 1 it was suggested that Hopkins's poems were made to be performed, and that we are therefore justified in calling his poetry a dramatic art, while in the previous chapter it was argued that the poet's ideas about language (which are an integral part of his theories of Being and knowledge) in large measure account for his development of this kind of poetry. Since I used "utterance" rather than "performance" in the last chapter, some explanation of how the move from "utterance" to "performance" is made is in order. The nature of language is such that it can be "the utterance and assertion" of Being in ordinary, everyday terms, but when poetic language is used, drawing on every resource the language has, the utterance takes on a character and an order so different, so complex, formal, and intense, that it is transformed into performance. Towards the end of the last chapter I mentioned the two ways in which poetic language communicates meaning, and it is performance which realises these as one harmonised experience, since it makes concrete the "presence" of what the language has directly laid hold of, even as it is the means by which the reader enacts and experiences fully those ways in which the language is like what it describes. Performance thus has a

1. LRB. p. 246. The poem referred to is "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves".

central place in the Hopkins poetic (as the quotation above emphasizes), and it is important that we consider firstly what kind of performance he had in mind, and secondly, in what context he expected it to take place. The second issue I leave to be dealt with in the following chapter, "The Poet's Audience".

It is worthwhile at the outset to reiterate, in rather more detail than the first part of Chapter 2 did,[1] the nature of the records of the poems Hopkins left us. John Robinson has well observed one of the problems new readers of Hopkins are likely to encounter.

> In fact, much of the exasperation which some people experience with Hopkins on first meeting is due to a radical confusion of modes: they are expecting a message, he has provided something more in the nature of a musical score. The typographic message is silent and cerebral, immediate and physically self-sufficient; the score awaits implementation, is an anticipation of sound to come, is unsatisfyingly incomplete.[2]

A little later Robinson writes:

> His manuscripts were notations, 'writing as the record of speech',[3] a way of transmitting the real poem but not the thing itself.[4]

The idea that Hopkins's manuscripts are like musical scores or the texts of plays is an extremely important one. The manuscripts themselves,

1. See p. 11.
2. op. cit. p. 68.
3. LRB. p. 265.
4. Robinson, p. 69.

with their abundance of diacritic marks[1] (some of them borrowed from music[2]), suggest that they are closer to musical scores than texts of plays, but the principle remains the same: his poems as we have them on the page are directions for their performance and not the poems themselves. It could be argued that this is true of all poetry and hence there is nothing especially significant about Hopkins's position in this regard;[3] however the fact that Hopkins made so much of his diacritic marks and of the need to perform his verse should warn us that he was trying to develop an art which was significantly different from other poetry. It may be a matter only of degree, but the difference is nevertheless important. Hopkins himself is the best source to turn to for some indication of what the difference is, since, as the quotations I give from time to time reveal, he was fully aware of what he was trying to achieve.

Robinson suggests that Hopkins "seems to have realised only slowly the fundamental change he was requiring in a reader's attitude",[4] but his case is based on a misrepresentation of the evidence. I give his argument in full.

> His first instruction puts the reader in the role of listener not performer: read ('The Loss of the Eurydice')'with your ears, as if the paper were declaiming it at you'.[5]

1. W. H. Gardner (Vol. 1, p. 94) identifies twenty-one such marks.
2. Of the twenty-one, six are derived from music: > , ' (staccato), ⌒ , ‿ (elision), ⌒‿⌒ (hurried feet, equivalent to a phrase mark), directions (eg. rallentando).
3. For the argument which could be used in support of this view, see Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, London, Jonathan Cape, 1954, Chapt. 12.
4. op. cit. p. 69.
5. LRB. pp. 51-52. (May, 1878).

> A year later this has become more physical: 'take breath and read it with the ears'.[1] Three years after that (1882) 'read it aloud',[2] but only in Ireland do we get to the point reached in the letter cited above[3] and repeated to Bridges: 'it is, as living art should be, made for performance'.[4]

However, two years before what Robinson calls Hopkins's "first instruction" the poet had made some notes on the way to read The Wreck of the Deutschland which show quite clearly that he intended his verse to be read aloud from the very first:

> ... not disguising the rhythm and rhyme, as some readers do ... but laying on the beats too much stress rather than too little;
>
> * * * * *
>
> ... where more than one syllable goes to a beat, then if the beating syllable is of its nature strong, the stress laid on it must be stronger the greater the number of syllables belonging to it the voice treading and dwelling: but if on the contrary it is by nature light, then the greater the number of syllables belonging to it the less is the stress to be laid on it, the voice passing flyingly over all the syllables of the foot ...
>
> * * * * *

1. LRB. p. 79. (April 1879).
2. ibid. p. 157.
3. This is the important letter from GMH to his brother Everard, which I refer to shortly. See Times Literary Supplement, 8 December, 1972, p. 1511, and Robinson, p. 68.
4. op. cit., p. 69. For the quote, see the quotation at the head of this chapter, or LRB. p. 246.

> And so throughout let the stress be made to fetch out both the strength of the syllables and the meaning and feeling of the words.[1]

In a note on the MS of "God's Grandeur" and "The Starlight Night", composed in early 1877, Hopkins had written, "To be read, both of them, slowly, strongly marking the rhythms and fetching out the syllables",[2] while in August of the same year, Hopkins had said to Bridges in a letter, "My verse is less to be read than heard, as I have told you before; it is oratorical .... "[3] It would seem that the poet used "read" in the sense of "read aloud" rather than "read silently", as Robinson assumes. However, there is another aspect to this problem. If we look at the whole of the comment on "The Loss of the Eurydice" quoted by Robinson, two phrases appear for the first time which were to become Hopkins's favourite way of distinguishing between the wrong and right way to read his verse: .

> To do the Eurydice any kind of justice you must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears, as if the paper were declaiming it at you. For instance the line 'she had come from a cruise training seamen' read without stress and declaim is mere Lloyd's Shipping Intelligence; properly read it is quite a different thing. Stress is the life of it.[4]

Here "reading with the eyes" is a way of reading aloud, flowingly and

1. Poems, p. 256. My underlining.
2. ibid. p. 263.
3. LRB. p. 46.
4. ibid. p. 51-52.

evenly, as we read prose and a great deal of poetry, while "reading with the ears" means reading "oratorically", stressing the strong syllables, drawing out the rhythms, the textures of the words, and the meanings. Eleven months later there is a possibility that "reading with the eyes" and "reading with the ears" have become two ways of reading silently, though here too the stress seems to fall on reading aloud:

> Indeed when, on somebody returning to me the Eurydice, I I opened and read some lines, reading, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right.[1]

In October 1882, Hopkins suggests to Bridges that he read the "Maiden's Song" from St. Winefred's Well with the ear silently as a preparation for reading it aloud:

> The long lines are not rhythm run to seed: everything is weighed and timed in them. Wait till they have taken hold of your ear and you will find it so .... If you want to try it, read one till you have settled the true places of the stress, mark these, then read it aloud, and you will see.[2]

On the other side, in 1885 Hopkins appears to suggest that reading with the eyes means reading silently:

1. LRB. p. 79.
2. ibid. p. 157.

> Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting; a record was kept of it; the record could be, was, read, and that in time by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only.[1]

A sentence or so later Hopkins speaks of a poetry whose effects were intended for the "whispered, not even whispered, merely mental performance of the closet, the study and so on".[2] The conclusion we must reach therefore is that over the years Hopkins thought reading with the eyes and reading with the ears could both be done either silently or aloud, but that throughout his mature period the main stress fell on reading aloud. Indeed, as I suggest shortly, "reading with the ear" meant reading, whether silently or aloud, in a particular way, a way which he eventually formulated as a performance. However, it is important to point out that there is remarkably little change in Hopkins's idea of how his verse should be read, or "performed", from the time of the Deutschland to the last poems, and therefore it would be a mistake to suggest that a considerable development took place. This is apparent if a comparison is made between the early comments quoted above on how to read the poems and a late one, for example, the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, part of which I give here for easy reference:

> .... it is .... made for performance and .... its performance is not reading with the eye but loud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables and so on.[3]

1. Times Literary Supplement, op. cit. column 3.
2. ibid.
3. LRB. p. 246.

Apart from the idea of performance, the rest of this passage appears in the early comments: the emphasis on not reading with the eye but to stress the accents and rhymes, the need to recite in a measured studied way, bringing out the beauty and meaning of the verse. It would therefore be reasonable to suggest that far from realising "only slowly the fundamental change he was requiring in the reader's attitude" as Robinson argues, Hopkins was aware of what he was demanding from the reader very early on - certainly by the time he wrote The Wreck of the Deutschland, and perhaps as early as 1873/1874, when he drew up the lecture notes in which he described verse as a "figure of spoken sound".[1] As we have seen, the roots of this concept of poetry lie in the notes on Parmenides and language of 1868 and the philological notes of the Oxford years. On the other hand it should also be said that Hopkins's conception of what reading his poems aloud meant, and what he was ultimately trying to achieve, underwent development and refinement as he matured, and it is to these later ideas that we must now turn for a more comprehensive understanding of his aims.

The idea that a "living art" is necessarily "made for performance" is a little cryptic in that it is not clear in what sense an art is living. It can live in the society from which it comes in being an accurate and deeply-felt statement of the life and experience of that society, or in the fact that it is well-known, and generally acknowledged as a fine work. It can also be a living art in the same way that music lives only in the instrument or voice of the performer. These are probably facets of Hopkins's general idea of a "living art", but for the important core of the idea we must go back a year to November 1885, where it was developed at some length in a letter to Everard Hopkins:

1. JP. p. 267.

> Every art then and every work of art has its own play or performance. The play or performance of a stage-play is the playing it on the boards, the stage; reading it, much more writing it, is not its performance. The performance of a symphony is not the scoring it however elaborately; it is in the concert room, by the orchestra, and then and there only. A picture is performed, or performs, when anyone looks at it in the proper and intended light. A house performs when it is now built and lived in. To come nearer: books play, perform, or are played and performed when they are read; and ordinarily by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only.[1]

I need to draw attention to two points here: one is that every art has its "proper performance", or way of being performed - a necessity which even something as mundane as a house shares; and the second is the curious way Hopkins switches from the active to the passive tense and back again when describing the performance of an art. He holds in a careful tension the paradox that the work performas itself through the human agent, as though he were a transparent medium, and yet at the same time the human agent is the active performer and interpreter of the work. The same balance is struck in the passage on "The Loss of the Eurydice", where the poem is first seen as though it were "declaiming itself" at the reader, and then as needing to be read with "stress and declaim". One reason for this ambivalence can be found in Hopkins's ideas about language discussed in the last chapter. I noted there the two ways in which Hopkins felt language related to what it denoted as well as the manner in which he strengthened this duality in his verse, and the same idea is making its presence felt here.[2] Because a success-

1. Times Literary Supplement, op. cit., column 3.

2. See pp. 91-92.

ful work of art exploits language so that it communicates in its own terms as well as in ours, there is a sense in which it performs itself through the human agent, and another in which the performer actively engages with the work to bring out its nature. Works of art often project the paradoxical sense that they have a potent life or energy of their own, and yet also need an effective performance to realise their full potential. This is true in a less literal way even of art forms not usually thought of as dramatic arts, like painting or sculpture, and is an indication of Hopkins's theoretical position: in this sense an art is a living art and is made for performance.

In the same letter Hopkins comments in detail on what he considers to be the true nature of poetry and on the kind of performance proper to it. These are so important that I give extensive quotations from the letter:

> Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting; a record was kept of it; the record could be, was, read, and that in time by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. This reacted on the art: what was to be performed under these conditions [,] for these conditions ought to be and was composed and calculated. Sound effects were intended, wonderful combinations even; but they bear the marks of having been meant for the whispered not even whispered, merely mental performance of the closet, the study and so on. You follow, Edward Joseph? You do: then we are there. This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; <u>till it is spoken it is not performed</u>, it does not perform, it is not itself .... As poetry is emphatically speech, speech purged of dross like gold in the furnace, so it must have emphatically the essential elements of speech.[1]

1. op. cit., column 3.

This is lucid and self-explanatory, but it is worth noting two points of interest. The first is the way Hopkins goes back to an early kind of poetry as the true and original form of the art. It would be a mistake to see this as an attempt to find a precedent or an authority which justified his own practice; it is rather an explanation of his poetry's lineage, a poetry which he had arrived at instinctively and independently. The existence of an older, oral poetry merely confirmed his own beliefs - though it did have the added advantage of providing, as it were, an historical blessing.[1] The irony is that by going back to an earlier poetry in order to recover some of the lost power and character of the art he took it forward in some respects into the twentieth century. And secondly, it is interesting to see the small development in the idea that the work simultaneously is performed and performs itself. There is a hint here that not only does the work perform itself by dictating to the performer how it ought to be done but in the utterance it takes on an independent life - a character, a meaning, an existence perhaps, which may at times be quite different from what the performer thought or intended to convey. This is parallel to Eliot's well-known remark that a poem can have meanings the poet is not aware of and did not (consciously) intend.

The idea that poetry is not performed, "is not itself" until it is spoken is elaborated later in the letter in a way which is particularly important:

> By the bye, as prose, though commonly less beautiful than verse and debarred from its symmetrical beauties, has, at least possible to it, effects more beautiful than

1. See J. H. Plumb, op. cit. for some interesting observations on the way mankind uses the past as a vindication of the present.

> any verse can attain, so perhaps the inflections and intonations of the speaking voice may give effects more beautiful than any attainable by the fixed pitches of music. I look on this as an infinite field and very little worked. It has this great difficulty, that the art depends on living tradition. The phonograph may give us one, but hitherto there could be no record of fine spoken utterance.
>
> In drama the fine spoken utterance has been cultivated and a tradition established, but everything is most highly wrought and furthest developed where it is cultivated by itself; fine utterance then will not be best developed in the drama, where gesture and action generally are to play a great part too: it must be developed in recited lyric. Now hitherto this has not been done. The Greeks carried lyric to its highest perfection in Pindar and the tragic choruses, but what was this lyric? not a spoken lyric at all, but song; poetry written neither to be recited nor chanted even nor even sung to a transferable tune but each piece of itself a song. The same remark then as above recurs: the natural performance and delivery belonging properly to lyric poetry, which is speech, has not been enough cultivated, and should be. When performers were trained to do it (it needed the rarest gifts) and audiences to appreciate it it would be, I am persuaded, a lovely art.[1]

There are important matters for discussion here. One which is only touched on in this passage, but developed a little earlier, is that there is a great difference in effect between merely speaking a poem aloud and reciting it properly. The difference is between success and failure, pleasure and distaste:

1. op. cit., column 5.

> Much the same is the case with plain chant music. Many of those who do not admire it have never heard it performed (or, worse, have heard it murdered) and cannot conceive the performance; for to read and even play it, without the secret, is no good.[1]

It is interesting that Hopkins should call the correct performance a "secret" and think of it as needing to be mentally "conceived": it is the key to the art, something which unlocks its real nature and purpose; once grasped, it is never lost - thereafter the poetry is always met with the response it requires. The "secret" in Hopkins's case is of course "fine spoken utterance", and we must examine this in a little detail.

Perhaps the most significant thing to emerge in the long passage quoted above is the extent to which Hopkins develops lyric poetry into a dramatic art in its own right, with particular skills and conventions unique to it, and its own character and beauty. He is quite plainly after a performance as artificial and professional as that demanded by a play, which gives the term "dramatic art" a significance, a status, it did not have when I used it in Chapter 1,[2] and underlines the radical nature of his endeavour. Lyric poetry was to move away from the closed, solitary appreciation which print and society had condemned it to, it was to lose the untrained simplicity and natural tones of the ordinary speaking voice, and move into a dramatic, public domain, using all the voice skills that actors and orators have developed, while at the same time developing the "inflections and intonations of the speaking voice".

1. ibid. column 4.

2. See p. 4.

into an art in itself. He was in other words trying, quite consciously and with his characteristic thoroughness, to create an entirely new kind of lyric poetry - perhaps a new genre of poetry altogether.

Some of these points are worth stressing. Hopkins's poetry undoubtedly requires the very great control and accuracy of the voice skills that acting has developed for drama, and this plays a major role in giving the poems something of the feel of drama. Let us consider the following example:

> To what serves mortal beauty | - dangerous; does set danc-
> ing blood - the O-seal-that-so | feature, flung prouder form
> Then Purcell tune lets tread to? | See: it does this: keeps warm
> Men's wits to the things that are; | what good means - where a
> glance
> Master more may than gaze, | gaze out of countenance.[1]

The ellipsis in these lines (especially in the first three), the need for exact intonation to convey the meaning intended (in a word like "dangerous" for example), the difficulty in placing stresses in the correct place and with the right degree of emphasis, all these factors place such considerable demands on a reader that a simple reading is just not possible; the intonations of the natural speaking voice are present but these are so caught up into the formal structure of the poem and so much more is required as a result of the interaction between the various kinds of structure (rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and rhythm for example) that the idea of a performance becomes more and more meaningful. Although the reader may not have the skills of an actor

1. Poems, 62, p. 98. Stress marks from CRWD. p. 129.

he has a good idea of what is required, and this in itself attaches a dramatic character to the poem, even though it may not be fully realised. However, it is not simply the fact that a performance is required which gives Hopkins's poems a feel akin to drama: it is true that a performance insists on being noticed, engaged with, and calls attention to what is being performed in a particularly telling way - factors which are important in creating the quality of bidding mentioned in Chapter 1 - but beyond these, Hopkins manages to create a tone of direct, personal address, often with a sense of urgency or excitement, as though what he is speaking about is important:

> To what serves mortal beauty | – dangerous; does set dancing blood – the O-seal-that-so | feature, ...

Thereby Hopkins invokes the presence of someone he is speaking to - there is a sense of correspondence, of a dialogue - and as hearers, readers, we are drawn into "the attitude of correspondent", of being in a vital relation both to the speaker and his subject. A corollary of these points is that the work has to satisfy the demands of poetry as well as those placed on it as a performing art (that is, it must be performable, and the performance it requires must in itself be artistically pleasing), a consideration that makes the performing arts more difficult to write and to perform. In an important sense they are higher arts, and this may have been the appeal a dramatic lyric had for Hopkins, since it made it that much more disciplined and heightened[1] and fused different arts (poetry, performance and "fine spoken utterance") into

1. See the epigraph to Part III.

a single form. Hopkins shows in his letter to Everard that he fully appreciated these points:

> Neither of course do I mean my verse to be recited only. True poetry must be studied. As Shakespeare and all great dramatists have their maximum effect on the stage but bear to be or must be studied at home before or after or both, so I should wish it to be with my lyric poetry.
>
> On the other hand there is verse, very good of its rhetorical kind (for that is what it is, rhetoric in verse), such as Macaulay's Lays, Aytoun's ditto, and ever so much that the Irish produce, flowing, stirring, and pointed, which recited seems first rate but studied at leisure, by the daylight, does not indeed turn out worthless, but loses the name of genuine poetry.[1]

Another matter which deserves attention is the development of the "inflections and intonations of the speaking voice" into an art in its own right. In the lines from "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" one can see something of this happening in the use of a single word "dangerous" for a whole sentence, or in phrases like "does set danc-/ing blood", and "the O-seal-that-so feature", where their sense and effectiveness depend a great deal on saying them with the modulations and tones we use in ordinary speech (partly to create the context for the poem, partly to convey the emotional pressure in the lines, and the delicate shifts in attitude - as, for example, in the move from "does set danc-/ing blood -" to "the O-seal-that-so feature", where mingled anxiety and excitement are modulated to surprise and delight); and yet

1. op. cit., column 4.

the overall effect is far from being that of ordinary conversation or speech. This is partly due to the way the language is moulded into alliterative and assonantal patterns and held in a strong rhythm, but apart from these factors, the dissimilarity between the tone of these lines and ordinary speech is due to a sense that the speech tones are being used in a slightly artificial way, that the aim is not an illusion of ordinary speech but to use ordinary speech for other, artistic purposes. The principle involved in developing a tradition of "fine spoken utterance" is the same as that used to develop sprung rhythm - indeed, it could be argued that sprung rhythm is part of the effort to develop this tradition - and that is to take various features of the language and use them in a regular way, in accordance with the laws and conventions proper to a "spoken utterance" or to rhythm, as the case may be.[1] However, although the poems themselves provide indications as to how ordinary speech may be used for artistic purposes, the problem, as Hopkins recognised, was that there was no way of fixing the conventions, of ensuring that later (or even present) generations would know how to recite the poetry. His glance at the phonograph is interesting in this regard, though it is curious that he seems to assume a tradition of dramatic lyric poetry already exists around him, when earlier in the letter he appears to recognise that he is engaged in a rather solitary effort at recovering the original character of poetry. Certainly, one of the problems Hopkins's poems present is that they are unique: as a body of poems they develop conventions for themselves but there is little in the way of an external tradition by which they can be judged, or which provides conventions for reciting them properly. They do have antecedents

1. See Chapter 7 for a discussion of this principle with regard to sprung rhythm.

in the poems of Donne and Milton for example, in which the sense guides one to the metre, as Coleridge observed, but there are a great number of effects in Hopkins's work which are not obvious or determined by the natural ways in which a line can be taken. They are calculated effects derived both from an idea of how they sound in performance and from how they sound spoken with regard to the sense - with the former sometimes dominating.

In the conclusion to the long quote on page 105 Hopkins makes another reference to the phonograph which is especially interesting:

> Incalculable effect could be produced by the delivery of Wordsworth's Margaret ('Where art thou, my beloved son?' - do you know it?). With the aid of the phonograph each phrase could be fixed and learnt by heart like a song.[1]

The idea that the recitation could be "learnt by heart like a song" points very much towards the traditions of oral poetry, when the bards ensured that their successors knew the poems by heart, and it underlines the nature of Hopkins's art. More important though is the implication that the nature of the art, the language employed, and the traditions it lives in, necessarily demand a particular kind of performance. Behind this implication may lie the idea that there is, at least in theory, one complete and definitive version of the poem, which every performance strives to realise, but the main idea is central: certain kinds of performance are inapt, while others have a kind of necessity and permanence about them, since they bring out the character, meaning,

1. op. cit., column 5.

beauty, of the poems so exactly in accordance with what we sense these things are, or can reasonably be taken to be. This is an attractive idea, since it does not rule out the possibility of different (and equally valid) interpretations of the same poem, but it does posit an ideal for performance within which any interpretation must be developed; and further, it implies an ideal form (in the philosophical sense) of the poem, of which any one performance is a partial realisation, and by this it points us toward the ideal form, gives us some deep sense of the poem as it is when it is truly complete. This is of a piece with Hopkins's stress on a "living tradition" of "fine spoken utterance", but it is more significant for the way in which it emphasizes the independence and integrity of a poem, and calls attention to its own being and living power.

The closeness of Hopkins's verse to music and drama makes it worthwhile sketching in briefly some of the parallels between the three arts. One of the most important of these is that all have a characteristically simple outward form, usually in three to five parts. The reasons for a simple structure are twofold. The first does not really apply to Hopkins, but it is worth mentioning as a factor in the dramatic arts, and that is the restrictions on length and complexity imposed by the limitations of the mind. It can only take in so much over a period of time, and of necessity the work must be neither too long, nor so complex that the mind is confused and the unity of the work broken up.[1] The second reason is more to the point, and Hopkins himself puts it well:

1. cf. Aristotle's admonitions about the length and complexity of drama, "On the Art of Poetry", Classical Literary Criticism (Trans., T. S. Dorsch), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, p. 42.

> It is however true that in the successive arts with their greater complexity and length the whole's unity retires, is less important, serves rather for the framework of that of the parts.[1]

Before this passage, Hopkins had been discussing the kind of artistic unity which brings the mind to a state of entranced contemplation, discussed in the last chapter,[2] and it is interesting in view of the very high place he gives to unity that he here recognizes the need for a unity composed of a simple framework for successive arts - the three or four movements of a symphony or concerto, the acts of a play, the part divisions in oral poetry. In this regard it is significant that Hopkins laid much less stress on the external structure of his poems (the rhyme scheme) and concentrated on the "over-reaving" of his verse,[3] and on the inner patterns and development,[4] clearly a practical application of the principle he recognised many years before he wrote his mature poems. Lest it be thought that Hopkins's frequent use of the sonnet form, with its two or three or four part structure,[5] biases his work in favour of a simple outline, it is important to point out that many of Hopkins's poems which are not sonnets have three of four stanzas,[6] or fall readily into two, three or four parts.[7]

1. JP. p. 126.
2. See p. 76.
3. See Poems, Preface, p. 48; LRB. pp. 86, 120; Gardner, Vol. 2, pp. 154, 172.
4. See Milroy, pp. 132-153 for illuminating comments on this aspect.
5. That is, octave and sestet, or two quatrains and sestet, or octave and two tercets, or two quatrains and two tercets.
6. For example, Poems 43, p. 78; 49, p. 84; 52, p. 86; 56, p. 89.
7. For example, ibid. 28, p. 51; 54, p. 87; 55, p. 88; 60, p. 93.

The rapid transitory impressions of a successive art, swiftly swallowing one another up, make a simple outward form essential, but it does not mean that considerable complexity cannot be developed within the work, and in fact a simple unity provides a strong frame suitable to an inner complexity. All art works have varying degrees of complexity, and Hopkins's are no exception, but successive arts have a complexity of a different order. The development of nearly all successive arts follows the pattern of complication, tension or conflict, and resolution, but because of the exigencies of time they frequently have an extreme density of expression, condensing a great deal into a few words or scenes, and thereby giving the work a more intense, more deeply-worked order. Here again this does not strictly apply to Hopkins as a reason for the extremely detailed development of his poems, since they are all so very short (with the exception of the Deutschland, and even that is not a particularly long poem), but it remains a significant fact that Hopkins wrote a successive art with a high level of complexity and simple external forms. He would appear to be obeying the general laws governing the performing arts, something which emphasizes again the consistency of his practice.

In one particular way Hopkins's poetry comes much closer to music than to drama. Drama is pre-eminently a public, popular affair, involving large numbers of people as a rule, whereas music has both a public and a private face, and it is the private face of music that the poetry is most like. Like a musician playing a piece to himself the reader can take a Hopkins poem and perform it to himself, though it should be said that a small number of the poems do lend themselves to more public performance - a point I will return to in some depth later. But the picture of the musician at his instrument bringing a score to life and the reader doing the same for a poem with his voice remains a satisfying

paradigm for the art Hopkins created. In view of this, it would seem that the decision made by successive editors of Hopkins not to print the poems with all the expressional and diacritic marks in the MSS is a mistaken one in some respects. It is true that there are several good reasons against printing the poems with the marks,[1] including the objections raised by Hopkins:

> You were right to leave out the marks: they were not consistent for one thing and are always offensive.[2]
>
> This is my difficulty, what marks to use and when to use them: they are so much needed and yet so objectionable.[3]

"Offensive" and "objectionable" are strong words, and there are two main reasons for the strength of Hopkins's reaction to the marks. One is that they appear to be an insult to the reader's intelligence, while the other he acknowledges in a letter of 1887, where he says that using such marks "seems a confession of unintelligibility".[4] However, there are excellent reasons for printing the poems with the marks, and these are also cogently argued for by Hopkins himself. The first and less important one is simply the prevention of misunderstanding. Hopkins had had enough experience of people's response to his poetry to know

1. W. H. Gardner mentions typographical reasons and Hopkins's own objections (Gerard Manley Hopkins, Selected Poems and Prose, Introduction, p. xxxi, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1963), while N. H. MacKenzie (Poems, p. xli) gives the variations and inconsistency in Hopkins's usage as another reason.

2. LRB. p. 189 (October, 1883).

3. ibid., p. 215 (April, 1885).

4. ibid., p. 265.

that even when things were clearly marked they were misunderstood,[1] and he strongly felt the need to make clear his intentions. For example, he continues the first quotation above:

> Still there must be some. Either I must invent a notation applied throughout as in music or else I must only mark where the reader is likely to mistake, and for the present this is what I shall do.[2]

And in the 1887 letter mentioned above, he writes:

> My meaning surely ought to appear of itself; but in a language like English, and in an age like the present, written words are really matter open and indifferent to the receiving of different and alternative verse-forms, some of which the reader cannot be sure are meant unless they are marked for him.[3]

It could be argued that the decision to print some of the less obvious or more difficult stresses is an adequate fulfilment of Hopkins's intentions here,[4] but there are two difficulties: one is the fact that Hopkins did not keep to his decision to mark only where people might mistake, and in "Harry Ploughman" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" for example, developed an even more elaborate notational system; and secondly, as I show in an analysis of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" in Chapter 9, the stress-marks alone are not adequate pointers

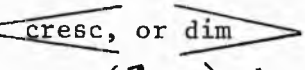
1. See, for example, ibid., p. 156.
2. ibid., p. 189.
3. ibid., p. 265.
4. See Poems, p. xl - xli.

to Hopkins's intentions or the meaning of the poems. This brings us to the second reason, which is that as "records of speech",[1] as directions for a performance, the printed versions of the poems by their very nature ought to have their metrical and expressional marks printed with them, in exactly the same way that a musical score has various indications as to its performance. Hopkins acknowledges this in the letter of 1883 when he speaks of a need to invent a consistent notation such as music uses, and in the 1887 letter he remarks:

> Besides metrical marks are for the performer and <u>such marks are proper in every art</u>. Though indeed one might say syntactical marks are for the performer too.[2]

1. <u>LRB</u>. p. 265.

2. ibid. My underlining. It is interesting to observe that J. L. Styan, in his book <u>The Dramatic Experience</u> (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1975, pp. 39-53), has a slightly simplified version of a notation that actors use to indicate how they speak their lines. I give a summary of it here, but the interesting point is how close these signs are in function to a number of Hopkins's marks. Styan distinguishes five factors in expression - Pressure, Pace, Power, Pitch and Pause, or Stress, Speed, Strength, Song, and Silence - and these are indicated by the following notation:

   Stress - underlining, double underlining for extra stress.
   Speed - an arrow (⟶ increase, ⟵ decrease) above the words.
   Strength -  above the words.
   Pitch - an arrow (↗ up, ↘ down) above the words.
   Pause - | between words, ‖ for longer pause.

   Further, the changes in pace in whole sections can be indicated by long vertical arrows at the side of the speech, one pointing up indicating a gradual slowing down, and one pointing down an increase in tempo.

Certainly a decision to print the poems with all their accompanying marks would have had three great advantages: it would have revealed very clearly the nature of the poetry Hopkins wrote, which he expounds so eloquently in the letter to his brother; it would have encouraged readers to pay greater attention to the way the various marks Hopkins used both intensify and expand the meaning of the poems (which would also have reinforced the awareness that the poems' performances were conceived as a completely integral part of their meaning - performance and sense were one from the outset, exactly like a piece of music[1]); and thirdly, these first two advantages combined might have prevented or disarmed some of the adverse criticism Hopkins has received from critics like Yvor Winters and Paull F. Baum, who both seriously misconstrue Hopkins's rhythmic intentions through not understanding the dramatic nature of his poetry.[2] And one could justify the printing of complete versions of the poems on one more ground: the last passage quoted above is both very positive about the use of diacritic marks (especially the sentence I emphasized), and a fairly late view, which would suggest that by the end of 1887 Hopkins had come round to a position which acknowledged the disadvantages of the marks but on balance approved their use, not merely because they removed misunderstanding, but because they were an intrinsic element in his art, and bore witness to its character.[3]

1. cf. " ... such verse as I do compose is oral, made away from paper, and I put it down with repugnance". FL. p. 379. See also CRWD. p. 42.

2. Winters, op. cit.; Paull F. Baum, "Sprung Rhythm", PMLA, Vol. 74, No. 4, Part 1, September, 1959, pp. 418-425. See Chapter 7 for comment on these critics' attacks on Hopkins.

3. See Appendix B for transcripts of the poems to which I have referred in some detail together with their diacritic marks.

The affirmative tone of the remarks from the letter of November 1887 leads to some concluding observations. Although I argued earlier that Hopkins's view of the way to read his verse did not change much, it is on the other hand true that by the time of the letter to Everard a considerable development had taken place in his idea of what kind of poetry it was he had been writing, and it is revealed by his use of the word "performance". Before it had been "read aloud" and "read with the ear", but "performance" reveals the emergence of a thorough understanding that he had been writing a dramatic lyric poetry. His grasp of this may have given him confidence in what he was about, since not only is there a confident air about the letter to Everard, the comment on "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and the remark that metrical marks "are proper in every art", but the extraordinary experimental poems which are a feature of his Irish period - "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "Tom's Garland", "Harry Ploughman", "That Nature is Heraclitean Fire" and "Epithalamion" (these are all poems "made for performance" par excellence) - suggest that Hopkins was developing his art in terms of a conception which gave him renewed assurance and energy - even courage - to write what must have seemed utterly strange to his contemporaries. And indeed, it is not impossible that it was a poem which led Hopkins to this understanding of his art: the letter to Everard was written in November 1885, and we know that by December 1884, lines 1 to 10 of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" were complete.[1] Perhaps, as he worked on the poem in late 1884 (and possibly during the following year, since it was not finished until late 1886) the realisation of what he was doing, and had done in the past, came to him or

1. Poems, pp. xlii, 284.

grew on him, and led to the formulations of the letters to Everard and Bridges, as well as the other late experimental poems. As Hopkins himself said of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", it "essays effects almost musical",[1] and "This sonnet shd. almost be sung: it is most carefully timed in tempo rubato."[2]

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to some remarks made by Michael Black in his article "The Musical Analogy".[3] He points out that some verse imitates music as best it can in its own medium, and one is conscious of an imitation at work,[4] but in other cases the musical parallel is more profound:

> I seem to identify in Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves a much deeper musical intention, where the words themselves are not as if "set" in another medium. Out of their own relationship, their own rhythms, is generated an expressiveness we had not expected to find in words alone. They are being used in ways which push boundaries outwards, so that language is itself extended.[5]

This is an illuminating comment on Hopkins's method and aims, and it underlies some earlier remarks which are equally important. Mr Black points out that it is enough to say with Dr Johnson that "our knowledge

1. LRB. pp. 245.
2. ibid., p. 246.
3. English, Vol. 25, No. 122, Summer 1976, pp. 111-134.
4. p. 114. He gives the close of "Binsey Poplars" as an example, and while I agree with his view that there is musical form present, I cannot agree that the musical pattern has taken over and that the lines are meaningless. See Chapt. 10, p. 370.
5. ibid.

of the meanings determines how we say things",[1] since, for example, musical notes have no meaning in themselves and yet can express very different things with the same power. He goes on:

> It will not do therefore, or it is not enough, to say that if we know what it means we know how to say it. It is reductive. We do not know all that it means until we have said it, and until we have said it in such a way that its full expressive force is realised. We then discover quite strange things about the meaning which we had not foreknown. The analogy with music is strong here too: performance is an essential aspect of the total expressiveness.[2]

These remarks are too clear to need any comment, but they allow one to emphasize a most important point: with Hopkins it is essential that each poem be discovered as it is in itself in its entirety; the physical reality of the words and their manifold relationships to one another need to be known at first hand. Only thus can the poem really be itself, and thereby yield up all its meaning.

1. p. 112.
2. ibid., p. 113.

CHAPTER 5

The Poet's Audience

> The drama ought to grow up with its audience; but now the audience is, so to say, jaded and senile and an excellence it knows of already cannot move it.[1]

In the last chapter I avoided rather assiduously the question of the relationship between a work of art and the audience for which it is written (a relationship which naturally involves to some extent that existing between an artist and his audience), though it is more than clear that Hopkins's poetics demand an audience in several senses. This chapter would not keep us long were it not for the fact that in the letter to Everard, and in one or two other places,[2] Hopkins shows that he thought of his dramatic lyrics as having audiences in the same way that music and drama do, whereas I suggested in Chapter 1 that the fact of their being lyric poems really denied them access to the public world of drama or music:[3] their deeply, and openly, personal cast, and their passion make them too intimate and private for the stage. Apart from that, their brevity and narrow range give them too little interest, or dramatic scope for that matter, to make them an adequate attraction. Of necessity, the taste for an art based on a tradition of "fine spoken utterance" would be a rarefied and restricted one. In view of these problems with Hopkins's position it is necessary to

1. LRB. p. 255.
2. ibid. pp. 263, 272.
3. See p.5.

consider the question of the audience in a little detail, and I begin with a general examination of his views about poetry and its audience.

We can distinguish three kinds of literary audience: the first is the general reading public, the second the audience at some kind of performance - a play or poetry-reading - and the third an audience consisting of the solitary reader, in Hopkins's case, an individual performer. Hopkins gave consideration to all three at various times, and their importance to him was fairly high, in contrast to a poet like Keats[1] (a point made all the more interesting by Hopkins's extreme literary isolation, though in his attitude to the social implications of art he showed himself a typical Victorian, as I suggest shortly). One of the more important of Hopkins's statements about the first kind of audience is in a fairly late letter (1886) to Bridges:

> By the bye, I say it deliberately and before God, I would have you and Canon Dixon and all true poets remember that fame, the being known, though in itself one of the most dangerous things to man, is nevertheless the true and appointed air, element, and setting of genius and its works. What are works of art for? to educate, to be standards. Education is meant for the many, standards are for public use. To produce them is of little use unless what we produce is known, if known widely known, the wider known the better, for it is by being known it works, it influences, it does its duty, it does good.[2]

1. See p. 47.

2. LRB. p. 321. The whole paragraph is important. cf. "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works (say, of art) and glorify your Father in heaven (that is, acknowledge that they have an absolute excellence in them and are steps in a scale of infinite and inexhaustible excellence)". ibid.

It is interesting to compare this passage with the following remarks by Alba Warren:

> No matter how carefully or in what terms post-romantic theorists distinguished the immediate end of poetry, as pleasure, beauty, or truth, they seem to have been far more concerned with its ultimate end, in particular its relation to morals and society. It was still possible in the general cultural situation of the Early Victorian period, at least in theory, to conceive of poetry as an effective social and moral force, and so far in England it had occurred to no one to claim autonomy for the aesthetic experience.[1]

Hopkins was thus quite close to the earlier Victorian theorists when it came to the relation between art and society, and although he hardly published anything in his lifetime, this thinking influenced the way he wrote poetry quite considerably. Apart from the fact that a good poet has a responsibility to his society - to mankind even - to produce a great deal of good work,[2] he has in addition to ensure that his poetry has the basis for being if not generally popular at least what Hopkins calls a "classic" - "read by many, acknowledged by all".[3] Hopkins had four principles or standards by which he judged the excellence of a work of art - serious subjects, "earnestness" or "in-earnestness", execution, and the "authentic cadence"[4] in the use of language - the use of a "native

1. English Poetic Theory, 1825-1865, London, Frank Cass & Co., 1966, p. 20. cf. Norman White, "Hopkins as Art Critic", All my Eyes See, Sunderland Arts Centre, Coelfrith Press, 1975, p. 91; Gardner, Vol. 2, p. 183.

2. FL. p. 359, CRWD. p. 15.

3. FL. p. 362.

4. Poems, 19, p. 28.

and natural" diction and syntax. These inform both his own poems and the judgements he made on the work of others; in terms of the works themselves they not only provide the basis for a popular appeal, but are part of the educational influence which art is meant to have in society.

Hopkins's insistence that art should take serious matters for its subjects hardly needs comment in view of his belief that art serves moral and social ends, but it is worth pointing out that for all his strictures on the use of Greek gods and obsolete settings,[1] he did not entirely rule out this kind of approach as a way of dealing with a serious subject:

> But I grant that the Greek mythology is very susceptible of fine treatment, allegorical treatment for instance, and so treated gives rise to the most beautiful results. No wonder: the moral evil is got rid of and the pure art, morally neutral and artistically so rich, remains and can even be turned to moral uses.[2]

"In-earnestness" and "execution" are key words in Hopkins's criticism, and although separable in discussion are part of the same process by which an artist transforms his material into a living work of art. Thus to Bridges Hopkins writes:

> This leads me to say that a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness; not gravity but the being in earnest with your subject - reality.[3]

1. LRB. pp. 216-217, CRWD. pp. 145-147.
2. CRWD. p. 147.
3. LRB. p. 225. See also ibid. p. 218.

"In-earnestness" does not of course mean being solemn or grave, but taking your subject and the material of your art seriously, aiming to be completely accurate and honest, and thereby to communicate the reality - the true nature - of what it is one is writing of. Yet if being in earnest is important and necessary, it can be marred by poor execution:

> In general I do not think you have reached finality in point of execution, words might be chosen with more point and propriety, images might be more brilliant etc.[1]

> The poem you send is fine in thought, but I am not satisfied with the execution altogether: the pictures, except in the first stanza, are somewhat wanting in distinction (I do not of course mean distinctness), and I do not think the rhythm perfect ...[2]

There are two meanings for execution suggested here: one is craftsman-like skill, what Hopkins elsewhere calls "workmanship"[3] - the ability to use a word effectively, to deploy the rhymes, rhythms, and sounds of words in a vivid and telling way, to craft the whole work into a unit; the other comes close to "earnestness" in that a failure of execution can be a failure to do justice to one's subject, a failure to communicate the reality - "words might be chosen with more point and propriety, images might be more brilliant etc." It is this twofold emphasis which leads Hopkins to give it such an importance later in life:

1. ibid. p. 35.
2. ibid. p. 81. See also ibid. p. 139 and CRWD. p. 141.
3. LRB. p. 72.

"Now this is the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution ...."[1] Execution is a skill, the development of a gift; it is what a poet has, while in-earnestness is what a poet must do; yet these shade off into one another, since a poet's capacity to be "earnest" is limited by the powers of execution he possesses. Together these give a work strength and beauty, a living power, and make it a standard of excellence in thought and artistic skill, all qualities which are prerequisites if it is to have any appeal, or any value, to society at large.

The question of using a natural diction and syntax is connected to Hopkins's development of sprung rhythm, but it appears to present a problem because of Hopkins's odd syntax and diction on occasions. However, as I suggest both here and in Chapter 8, his practice is generally justified, and in the case of diction he adequately covered his tracks.[2] For some insight into why Hopkins turned to what was natural to English, his now famous dictum that " ... the poetic language of an age shd. be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not ... an obsolete one"[3] is a good starting point. In context this sentence takes on a slightly different significance, for it arises out of the poet's objections to the deleterious effects that archaisms (o'er, ere, wellnigh), and archaic inversions have on poetry:

1. CRWD. p. 133.

2. In the next quotation, the omitted section is a parenthesis reading: "I mean normally: passing freaks and graces are another thing", and in another quotation following shortly he remarks that "Some little [archaism] flavours ..."

3. LRB. p. 89.

> By the by, inversions - As you say, I do avoid them, because they weaken and because they destroy the earnestness or in-earnestness of the utterance.[1]

> I hold that by archaism a thing is sicklied o'er as by blight. Some little flavours, but much spoils, and always for the same reason - it destroys earnest: we do not speak that way, therefore if a man speaks that way he is not serious, he is at something other than the seeming matter in hand, non hoc agit, aliud agit.[2]

Archaisms "destroy earnest" in two simple but effective ways: one is when the archaic word or inversion (or both) is used in order to fill out, shorten, or adjust the line in some way, so that the conditions of rhyme, rhythm, or line length are met - as Hopkins says this is "enfeebling" when it is seen to be done for the sake of the verse.[3] The second is when a poet uses them as part of a system he has adopted of conventional uses - a peculiar "poetic" diction and tone, a consciously contrived posture. These two often occur together, and their effect is the same. Because they are a bad debt, paid to the demands of form or convention, they are worn-out, wooden, undemanding. The verse conveys little sense that the poet has actually seen something, or put his perceptions into the terms he would use had he seen anything. His hold on the reality of things is conventional, tenuous, clichéd. This unnaturalness arising from archaisms Hopkins dislikes not only because it "destroys earnest" but because its hold on the public of the day is tenuous.

1. ibid.
2. ibid. p. 218.
3. ibid. p. 89.

Because the language is old and tired it cannot communicate with adequate vividness or depth of feeling, and the readers of the work similarly are unable to respond because their experience is no longer mediated in those terms. A dead language is being used instead of a living one, and the effect, as Hopkins says, is of "unreality".[1]

The other side of this coin is "current language heightened". It is interesting that Hopkins should add "to any degree heightened and unlike itself", since this is certainly true of a few of Hopkins's poems, and he may be criticised for using a language as distant from current language as an archaic one is. However, there is a great difference between unnaturalnesses arising from manipulations of current language and those appearing as a result of using an archaic one. The fact that Hopkins's poetry begins with the diction, and syntax, and idioms of the language of his own day means that his contemporaries have a basis for understanding and responding to the work in their own lived experience of the language, however far it may be removed from the immediate use they make of it. Furthermore, because Hopkins wrote his poetry to be spoken aloud, it has a further appeal to the native speaker because it exploits so fully the sounds and rhythms of the language and the way they feel on the tongue. The stressy, consonantal character is emphasized, while the patterns of vowels and consonants add beauty to a language shaped into powerful and sometimes even barbarous forms.[2] Thus the

1. ibid. p. 218. GMH has much to say about unreality in the whole letter in reference to Bridges' play Ulysses, and it is interesting that he should speak of the unreality of Greek gods in a work as killing "every living work of art they are brought into". (p. 217). Here again the poet's hold on his material, and the work's hold on its audience is weak.

2. For example, "Tom's Garland", Poems, 70, p. 103.

current language provides a path between reader and work, and puts the former in a position to judge for himself whether what he reads is a living, authentic expression of the poet's or his society's vision. Further, where a work is successful and enduring, its audience expands by the same means - those who read it feel the genuineness of the experience through the strength of the language.

The phrase "current language" raises a problem though - whose current language? Judging by the poems and notebooks, Hopkins would appear to have been fairly eclectic, using a word from any dialect, or class of society, if it felt right, though in the main he tended naturally to use the language of his own social level. In this regard, I would like to pick up two points from Geoffrey Hill's fine essay on Hopkins, "Redeeming the Time",[1] as illustrations of Hopkins's intuitive grasp of a current language which could have a deep hold on men and women everywhere, whatever their station in life. Hill's essay is very closely worked and I do him an injustice in taking his arguments out of context, but they are important and telling wherever they appear. Briefly, Hill suggests that in the nineteenth century there were severe disruptions and ambivalences in the lives of most people, which were reflected in the diction and rhythms - both of language and life - of the different classes: impoverished and politically active working class men produced a demogogic public language, passionate, simple, designed to stir up anger and violence,[2] while the upper classes lived on, insulated and relatively undisturbed; they seemed more astonished at the wonders of the industrial age than appalled at the degradation and misery it had created under

1. Agenda, Vol. 10, No. 4 - Vol. 11, No. 1, 1972/1973, pp. 87-111.
2. ibid. pp. 88, 93-94.

their noses.[1] At the same time, the agricultural and religious rhythms had been disturbed by the onset of industrialisation and for many these profound cycles had lost their hold on their lives and hence their significance.[2] But in his rhythms and diction, Hopkins sought to include all the conflicting energies of his time and reconcile them in a greater unity:

> The "magical change" in the "Immortality" Ode is perhaps the greatest moment in nineteenth century English poetry; but in choosing this term one is suggesting restriction as well as potency. The recognition and the strategy to match the recognition - the cessation of "stride", the moment of disjuncture, the picking up of fresh "stride" - were of their very nature inimitable; they were of and for that moment. It could be said, however, that in his choice of themes and methods, Hopkins is attempting a correlative pattern. The achievement of sprung rhythm is its being "out of stride" if judged by the standards of common (or running) rhythm, while remaining "in stride" if considered as procession, as pointed liturgical chant or as chantey. In "Harry Ploughman" the man is in stride, his craft requires it; and the poem itself, in its rhythm and "burden lines", is the model of a work song. In the companion piece, "Tom's Garland", the dispossessed are thrown out of work and out of stride and the piece is, both discursively and rhythmically ("common rhythm, but with hurried feet") perhaps the harshest, and most crabbed, of all Hopkins's poems.[3]

1. ibid. p. 102.
2. ibid. pp. 107-8, 110.
3. ibid. p. 104.

Here the rhythms mirror the disruptions and fragmentation of one part of society, and the single, simple harmony of another. Yet in another poem "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" all the destructive and disintegrating processes of existence are redeemed by the Resurrection, and as I show in Chapter 9, the rhythms of this poem are a vital element in the whole poem, from the breaking down of the first part to the redemptive vision of the second.

Integral with Hopkins's rhythmic practices is his use of the short word:

> The short words are neither rooted nor uprooted, graced nor ungraced; they may go with the "tempo" or they may be made to react against it. They are the most elemental material, and they are the abrupt selving of prayer: "We lash with the best or worst / Word last!" ("Deutschland", 8).[1]
>
> The "short word", "mot prophète et radieux" ("ah! bright wings"; "ah my dear",) tackles the brutality, buffoonery and mere obtuseness of English and transfigures it. "Wragg,poor thing" or "WE WILL HAVE THE BILL" are there in "Some find me a sword; some / The flange and the rail; flame,/Fang, or flood", "They fought with God's cold -", "And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell"; and they are answered by "I did say yes" and by "Christ, King, Head". What we have termed the ambivalent power of the short word is most eloquently realised in the final line of "Carrion Comfort": "(my God!) my God". The abrupted experiences once more commune with each other: the expletive of a potentially filthy bare forked animal ("I wretch", "carrion") and the bare word of faith.[2]

1. ibid. pp. 108-109.

2. ibid. pp. 109-110.

The short word is capable of expressing the full range of human experience, and Hopkins uses its expressive power and malleability to draw into his poems the troubled, divided sensibility of his time and then includes them in a vision of purpose and harmony found in Christ. As Hill remarks of the Corpus Christi procession:

> the Corpus Christi procession was inclusive of passion and belief, highly popular as well as richly liturgical, it did not spill over into the demotic but drew the demotic in. Possibly the best description of Hopkins's poetic method would be his own "recurb and ... recovery" ("Deutschland", 32).[1]

Thus although it is true that Hopkins uses a diction drawn on the whole from the current language of his peers, in another sense he draws on the current language of his age, both in his diction and rhythms, and these reveal his penetrating insight into the things going on around him, the sureness of his hold on the deep-laid character and pulse of the nineteenth century.

One of the anomalies that Hopkins sooner or later presents to critics is the fact that Bridges only published the poems thirty years after his death, when in view of the discussion so far he would appear to be a poet the later Victorian period needed as much as his work deserved public recognition. I say this advisedly, since there is a belief that Hopkins did not want to publish after The Month rejected his two shipwreck poems; for example, John Mathison takes the line that since Hopkins saw himself as a professional priest and not a poet, and since his output was small, he was under none of the obligations he laid on Bridges,

1. ibid. p. 110.

Dixon and Patmore to write much and be published.[1] This is true to some extent, as Mathison's references show,[2] but there is another and more relevant side to it. Although Hopkins did at one point say to Bridges, "I do not write for the public",[3] and to Dixon, "But even the impulse to write is wanting, for I have no thought of publishing",[4] his later practice differs from his earlier stated intentions. He was clearly very keen to have The Wreck of the Deutschland and "The Loss of the Eurydice" published, and their rejection probably coloured his attitude to publication for the rest of his life. For example he vigorously protested to Dixon about the latter's attempt to get the "Eurydice" published,[5] and yet with some eagerness he sent off three sonnets to Hall Caine in 1881, apparently with few qualms about the need to consult his superiors, or the effect on himself of publication.[6] These contradictions suggest that Hopkins was in a conflict over many years about publication, and it is a conflict which lies deeper than we may at first suppose. The creative impulse not only was very strong in him but meant a great deal to him, as his letters to Dixon and Bridges from Liverpool show;[7] and the letters from Dublin complain of not being able to produce anything, of his being a "eunuch" over long periods.[8] The last sonnets

1. "The Poetic Theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins", Philological Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 1, January 1947, p. 24.
2. LRB. p. 66. CRWD. pp. 88, 93.
3. LRB. p. 46. (August 1877)
4. CRWD. p. 15. (October 1878)
5. ibid. pp. 29-32.
6. LRB. p. 127.
7. ibid. p. 124, CRWD. pp. 33, 43.
8. LRB. p. 270.

also reveal his frustration and despair at his fruitlessness, at the failure of his muse except for short spurts.[1] The creative drive was thwarted both by the restrictions he felt his profession and order placed on him, and by his melancholia, which left him "jaded" and depressed for months on end. Linked to this is the fact that Hopkins probably had a realistic idea of the worth of his own poems (an opinion which would have been reinforced by the judgements of Bridges and Dixon[2]): writing to Bridges about Hall Caine's response to his sonnets, Hopkins wrote "/Caine/ is not going to print me, because the purpose of his book ... is to 'demonstrate the impossibility of improving upon the acknowledged structure whether as to rhyme, scheme or measure'. Poor soul, he writes to me as a she bear robbed of her cubs".[3] And later, "Before your note of warning I had written a longish letter to him /Caine/ gently poking fun. His manner was that I was a 'young aspirant' and he a judge by whose nod I stood or fell - a thing not to be thought".[4] The truth is I think that Hopkins knew his own worth and wrote his poems with an eye on a potential public, something underlined by the Author's Preface he wrote in 1883, which suggests that he intended, or hoped, to be published at some stage: but faced with a refusal to publish his poems from a Catholic magazine, and the dismay and incomprehension which readers of his poems communicated to him,[5] he withdrew entirely from publication at one point, then tried again, was again rejected, and stopped altogether, but always hoped that at some stage he would

1. ibid. cf. Poems, 74, p. 106; 76, p. 108.
2. CRWD. p. 26-27, 32-33, LRB. p. 129, FL. p. 356.
3. LRB. p. 128.
4. ibid. p. 128.
5. For example, Coventry Patmore, FL. pp. 352-354.

gain recognition. In considering this we must also remember that Hopkins was a deeply sensitive man:[1] he was frequently very worried about what people would think of him,[2] and he was acutely sensitive about the "oddness" of his poetry as well as the effect any adverse publicity might have on the Society of Jesus. Yet as John Robinson points out, there is later a longing for publication and recognition: "what I want there, to be more intelligible, smoother and less singular is an audience".[3] (A further irony is that although Hopkins always felt that public fame was due to a good poet, he was also very critical of the public's taste and judgement.[4]) These conflicting opinions and impulses in Hopkins led to the paradoxes and contradictions in his attitudes, and John Robinson sums it up well: "Hopkins wavers, then, between desire for recognition and fear of what the public scrutiny it involves might bring".[5] In the light of this it is a reasonable conclusion that although Hopkins feared and denied himself publication, he wrote with an audience in mind, taking pains to ensure that his poems fulfilled what he believed were the legitimate reasons for poetic fame, and hoped in due course to gain recognition from the general public. And indeed, it is not entirely certain that he would not have gained some recognition if his poetry had been published before or shortly after his death: if Bridges and Dixon and one or two others could recognise a true poet in spite of their preconceptions and prejudices, there is a fair possibility that a good many more might have grasped Hopkins's

1. See Robinson, pp. 14-16. The whole section is illuminating.
2. See SDW. pp. 253-254.
3. LRB. p. 291.
4. CRWD. p. 8. LRB. pp. 77-8, 179.
5. op. cit. p. 16.

stature and a small following could have developed. The epigraph to this chapter is true of new movements in art and individual artists in the sense that they educate the public into understanding and liking their work, and gradually create a taste for what they are doing. This important point brings us against the fact that Hopkins apparently hoped not simply for general public recognition - which as people began to understand his poetry would have led in time to the audience of individual performers his poetry demands - but beyond this he wanted a new audience to grow up for his dramatic lyric poetry, as he suggests in his letter to Everard.[1]

This audience would apparently develop out of public performances of the poems, and would be a specialised group amongst the public that attends the performing arts. By the nature of the art the audiences would necessarily be fairly small, but the public element would nevertheless be present, as one of Hopkins's remarks to Everard shows: "When performers were trained to do it ... and audiences to appreciate it, it would be, I am persuaded, a lovely art".[2] On the face of it, this idea seems ill-founded: there are other objections to it apart from those raised at the beginning of this chapter - for example, the fact that no-one followed Hopkins, or that he was misunderstood for many years - but those noted earlier are sufficient to sink it. But there is another important side to the question, and a clue to its nature is found in Hopkins's reference to the Greek lyric poetry of the tragic choruses.[3] One purpose of the choruses was to draw the general moral, to universalize the tragic action in terms of the ill-chances and suffering that mankind has to bear, taking in the chorus, the audience and the

1. TLS., op. cit., column 5.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.

humanity beyond. The choruses of the tragedies were therefore a lyric dramatisation of the common human lot. Some of Hopkins's poems are like these Greek choruses, and are the result of fusing a language made to be performed with the capacity of lyric poetry to deal with universal human experiences in its unique way. For all the emphasis lyric poetry places on the personal or private experience, it has always seemed to need the most universal experiences as well - love, old age, lost innocence, loss and grief, death, God, religious experience in general, good and evil - and as a result most lyric poetry is a personal statement of a common experience. However, it can go beyond this: there are times when the context in which an experience occurs is so comprehensive, and the experience itself so profound and archetypal, so all-embracing, that the lyric "I" is subsumed in the universal "we".[1] Poems like The Wreck of the Deutschland,[2] "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire"[3] and "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"[4] fall into this category:

> For earth | her being has unbound, her
> dapple is at end, as -
> tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; | self in self
> steepèd and pashed - quite

1. cf. the following remarks by Bernard Bergonzi, "Although these sonnets /the terrible sonnets/ are intensely and unmistakeably personal, they are written with a dramatic power that one can appropriately call Shakespearean. At its most intense pitch, the personal takes on a kind of universality". Bergonzi refers immediately after this to T. S. Eliot's essay, "The Three Voices of Poetry" (Cambridge, 1955), which provides a useful gloss on the point made here. (Gerard Manley Hopkins, New York, Collier Books, 1977, p. 186)

2. Poems, 28, p. 51.

3. ibid., 72, p. 105.

4. ibid., 61, p. 97.

Disremembering, dísmémbering | áll now. Heart, you round
me right
With: Óur évening is over us; óur night | whélms, whélms,
ánd will énd us.
Only the beakleaved boughs dragonish | damask the tool-
smooth bleak light; black,
Ever so black on it. Óur tale, O ~our oracle![1]

There are other poems, less obviously "made for performance" or intended to be performed in the way that "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is, which could be included with those I have mentioned - "The Windhover",[2] "Patience, hard thing",[3] and "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez".[4] In addition, one or two poems dealing with public events and important social issues - The Wreck of the Deutschland again, "Tom's Garland"[5] - are also candidates because they deal overtly with matters of public or social import, while "Harry Ploughman"[6] is a poem which is not only one of the most performable Hopkins wrote, but it also transforms the ploughman into an archetypal figure of the peasant, with his power and beauty and stolid, enduring character. I would suggest therefore that Hopkins's mature poetry consists of two main types: one is the more purely lyric and personal kind of poem, while the other takes on a universal quality, partly because of the kind and scope of the experience, and partly, as Bernard Bergonzi suggests, because of its personal intensity. This would suggest that Hopkins's poetry has (at least in theory) two kinds of audience: the former type of poem is suited to the private world of the individual or small, intimate circle of poetry lovers, and the latter type (a smaller group of poems and made up mostly of late ones) is suited to, or at least could bear, public performance; as a result it is mainly composed of poems

1. ibid., pp. 97-98.
2. ibid., 36, p. 69.
3. ibid., 68, p. 102.
4. ibid., 73, p. 106.
5. ibid., 70, p. 103.
6. ibid., 71, p. 104.

for inclusion in the second group (for example, "Patience hard thing") might be performed like many of the poems in the first group - that is, close to a normal speaking voice - while others closer in performance to poems like "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (for example "Carrion Comfort"[1]) belong in the first group.[2] I should add that the poems of the second group are as at home with the individual and the intimate circle as those of the first are, but the reverse of course does not apply.

It might be asked why Hopkins developed to such a degree a feature of poetry which is always present, or at least a latent characteristic. The poet himself might have argued that this is the true nature of art and he was only developing in a new way what had been done rather differently before,[3] but the question then presents itself as to why he should consider this the true nature of art. To this question there are two important answers. Firstly, we must not think that the kind of performance Hopkins demands is merely a performance of the poem: it involves far more, in the same way that drama and music involve infinitely more than the words, notes, plot and design. Drama apparently originated in Greece from religious rites, where the priests involved enacted a ceremony in which by some power they were and were not the character they represented; and in primitive societies, enactment by members of the tribe of ancestral spirits or local deities is not merely enactment; in some mystical way they become the beings they represent.[4] In a similar way, the bushman who disguises himself as an ostrich in order to hunt the bird must think himself into being an ostrich if he is to be successful. Performance involves an act of engagement, of closure

1. ibid., 64, p. 99.
2. These distinctions are refined and elaborated in Part III, particularly Chapter 10.
3. "Every are then and every work of art has its own play or performance". TLS. op. cit., column 3.
4. See, for example, Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart.

with what is imitated, and simultaneously a self-surrender. This combination of self-forgetfulness with alert, perceptive engagement lies at the heart of knowledge and morality, and it is therefore central to art as it is to many other things. The same principle is at work in Hopkins's theories of language, Being and knowledge. Since in Hopkins's terms a poem bears a direct and an indirect relationship to what it describes in its language, the readers (or performers) of the poem are made to participate not only in the poem as such but in the things the poem describes and is ultimately derived from. There is in other words a deeper and more important "enactment" being engaged in. An illustration makes this a little clearer. In the Introduction to his edition of Sir Gawain and the Green Gome, R. T. Jones discusses the evocative alliteration of the poem, some of which he notes is onomatopoeic. He goes on:

> But this, it may be objected, is merely onomatopoeic - a device, a technique, easily acquired by an alliterating poet and guaranteeing nothing. Let us consider, then, the line,
>
> There thre thro at a thrich thrat him at ones
>
> The line in its context is somehow full of the snapping dogs. But how? No sound in the line imitates the sound of snapping jaws. This, then, is not onomatopoeia. But one cannot speak the line, with its profusion of th sounds, without becoming intensely aware of teeth - one's own teeth. This sequence of words could only have occurred to someone whose imagination was compelling him to participate in (not merely to observe or to listen to) the snapping of dogs.[1]

1. Pietermaritzburg,University of Natal Press, 1965, p. 2.

That Hopkins was successful in the same way can be judged from a remark Bridges made to the "good Canon" and passed on by Dixon to Hopkins. "Bridges struck the truth long ago when he said to me that your poems more carried him out of himself than those of anyone".[1] Many readers after Bridges would fully agree.

The second answer centres around the function of the artist and his work. This of course varies from one age or period to another, and from culture to culture, but in general the artist has usually been regarded as an important figure - perhaps as the repository of the society's wisdom, morality, history and mythology, or for his visionary powers, or simply as an artist, the maker of beautiful artefacts of one kind or another, one who gives pleasure even when he portrays the ugly, fearful or evil in our lives. As this chapter has shown, Hopkins stressed the educative and moral influence the artist ought to exert, but this derives from his fundamental theoretical position, which as earlier discussions have suggested makes the poet the mediator of reality in the natural world, in human experience, and also its interpreter. This is especially clear in those poems I isolated as being lyrics where the scale and importance of the issues they deal with, and weightiness of the thought and passion, give them an enduring and universal significance, but it is true in a general way of all his work. The position is not new and goes back to Greece at least:

> The dramatists early realized how many important uses the standing stage-army [i.e. the chorus] could be made to serve. It can expound the past, comment on the present, forebode the future. It provides the poet with a mouth-piece and the spectator with a counterpart of himself.

1. CRWD. p. 100.

> It forms a living foreground of common humanity above which the heroes tower, a living background of pure poetry which turns lamentation into music and horror into peace. It provides both a wall, as Schiller held, severing the drama like a magic circle from the real world, and a bridge between the heroic figures of legend and the average humanity of the audience.[1]

The poet, like the chorus, speaks to and on behalf of men, though in addition Hopkins changes the audience's passive role into a fully active and engaged one, harking back perhaps to those days when entire communities were personally involved in the rites and festivals which gave birth to drama.

Although Hopkins failed to create the audience he would have liked for his poetry - especially for the group of overtly dramatic poems noted above - in the end his failure matters little. The dramatic nature of the poems is there to be discovered, and they are sufficient achievements in themselves to be not only a new kind of lyric poetry (or a new dramatic art) but to suggest what Hopkins had in mind when he spoke of an art based on a tradition of "fine spoken utterance". The failure does underline two important points though: the first is that however we may approach Hopkins's poetry, it richly repays both performing it oneself and hearing it performed by someone else - especially after close personal study, as Hopkins recommended:[2] there is something to be said for doing and hearing; and secondly, it reveals the radical nature of Hopkins's art:

1. Quoted by E. Drew, Discovering Drama, New York, Kennikat Press, 1968, p. 50, from F. L. Lucas, Tragedy.

2. TLS. op. cit., column 4.

what he was about was never really understood in his lifetime nor for many years after he was first published, and perhaps even now we have still not quite grasped what he achieved.

Part II

The Shaping World

CHAPTER 6

The Shaping World

This chapter will seek to explain (albeit briefly) why Hopkins developed the theory of poetry examined in the preceding chapters. Since it must be short I will not attempt a detailed exploration of the influences which formed Hopkins's poetics, but will point out some we can be sure of, and suggest others which are more speculative. While this is not entirely sufficient, it will be adequate to indicate both the course of the theory's development and its character.

The factor which in some respects is the most significant is also the one most difficult to verify because it is the most personal and inaccessible - I mean Hopkins's inborn sensibility and temperament. By the few accounts we have he developed early many of those qualities which came to typify the man and his poetry. The letter from C. N. Luxmoore to Arthur Hopkins in Further Letters is especially revealing.[1] The poet's independence, courage, intelligence and stubborn will clearly stand out in Luxmoore's descriptions, especially in the famous bet Hopkins made not to take fluids for a week (or three weeks in Luxmoore's version), and the conflict with the Headmaster that followed.[2] The qualities I have mentioned are more important, however, later on, when Hopkins was developing his ideas, and then ably defending them over several years to Bridges and others. More significant at this early stage is the Keatsian sensuousness revealed in the early poems - rather unlike Keats in some ways, and perhaps even more highly developed:

1. pp. 394-396.

2. See FL. pp. 1-3, and Bernard Bergonzi, Gerard Manley Hopkins, New York, Collier Books, 1977, pp. 3-4.

For that staunch saint still prais'd his Master's name
While his crack'd flesh lay hissing on the grate;
Then fail'd the tongue; the poor collapsing frame,
Hung like a wreck that flames not billows beat - [1]

Plum-purple was the west; but spikes of light
Spear'd open lustrous gashes, crimson-white;

* * * * *

... or clouds of violet glow'd
On pranked scale; or threads of carmine, shot
Thro' silver, gloom'd to a blood-vivid clot.[2]

These illustrations come from poems written when Hopkins was sixteen ("The Escorial") and eighteen ("A Vision of the Mermaids"), and already there is an intense, perceptive appreciation of natural phenomena, though the imagery is over-rich and there is a preciousness in the thought and imagery. Nevertheless, the sensuous vision is acute. The lines quoted also reveal an undeveloped (and undisciplined) awareness of sound patterns and the relations which can exist between sound and meaning, as in "spikes of light / Spear'd open lustrous gashes, crimson-white". However, I want to draw attention in particular to the combination of intensity and sensuousness, of philosopher and naturalist in Hopkins. There is a characteristic closeness of focus, a penetrating intentness to his mental gaze and sensory perceptions combined with a delighted savouring of the physical qualities of everything around him, a disposition which exerted a considerable influence on every aspect of his life. His capacity for detailed, precise observation and for relating the

1. Poems, 1, p. 3.
2. ibid., 2, pp. 8, 10.

individual parts of anything to the whole gave him a notable perspicuity and penetration, but joined to his obvious pleasure in his sensory faculties and in the creation's physical beauty, it gave his poetry and the Journal descriptions in addition an exuberant vitality which is characteristically Hopkinsian because it never escapes from the intense exactness of his vision.

This cast of mind in Hopkins became particularly important when his philological interests were aroused at Oxford, and he began his lengthy examination of the nature of language. The philological notes preserved in the poet's Oxford diaries reveal a similar sensuous appreciation of words: a careful weighing up of their sounds and rhythms, a delight in the individual character of each word - "Sky peak'd with tiny flames. .... Altogether peak is a good word".[1] This includes relations between words close in sound and meaning, and most important, relations between the physical properties of words and the physical properties of what they denote. Origins, development, onomatopoeia, are all brought under close, detailed examination, and then included in an expanding theory of language.[2] The effect on the poetry is evident enough - we are never allowed to ignore the individual word or its manifold relations to other elements in the poem - but its impact on the theoretical formulations is more profound and wide-reaching than this. It is unlikely, for example, that Hopkins could have made the remarkable notes on the nature of words and art on February 9, 1868[3] (discussed in detail in Chapter 3) unless he had first had the exacting encounter with words during his Oxford years. The power and complexity with which words

1. JP. pp. 46-47.
2. ibid. pp. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 25, 31-32, 47.
3. ibid. pp. 125-126.

conveyed their meanings pose problems which led Hopkins to the solution proposed in these notes and those on Parmenides, and it is worth emphasizing that the answers he arrived at are a fusion of his own concrete experience with a number of philosophical concepts, and they therefore have one foot firmly in the observed nature of the world. A further point, if we accept John Robinson's argument that the notes in question show Hopkins searching for the terms "instress" and "inscape",[1] is that his intensity of vision, not only in regard to language but to his whole experience, opened up for him the world of instress and inscape, and led him to link very closely his ideas about Being, knowledge and language - and he clearly found the accord between these most satisfying.

In view of the excesses noted in the early poetry, it is significant that later in life Hopkins condemned Keats's verse for, "at every turn abandoning itself to an unmanly and enervating luxury".[2] As Robinson has pointed out, "manly" and related words became important in Hopkins's criticism,[3] and it is clear from a remark like, "I endeavoured in it [sic "Andromeda"] at a more Miltonic plainness and severity than I have anywhere else"[4] that he liked, and sought to write on occasions, a poetry free from the extended, often spectacular (and sometimes excessive) use he made of vivid imagery and complex verbal patterns. In considering the large differences between the early and the mature poetry, we need to ask ourselves what led to the toughness, the strength and discipline - "manliness" if one likes - of poems like The Wreck of the Deutschland as well as the severer, plainer ones like "Andromeda", in contrast to

1. op. cit., p. 34.
2. FL. p. 386.
3. op. cit., pp. 8-9.
4. LRB. p. 87.

the sentimental and slightly masochistic sensuousness of the following lines from "Easter Communion":

> Pure fasted faces draw unto this feast:
> God comes all sweetness to your Lenten lips.
> You striped in secret with breath-taking whips,
> Those crooked rough-scored chequers may be pieced
> to crosses meant for Jesu's;[1]

These lines from the Deutschland provide an illuminating comparison:

> I did say yes
> Oh at lightning and lashed rod:
> Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
> Thy terror, O Christ, O God;[2]

For the most important answers to this question we need to look into three different areas.

First, there was in Hopkins a strong tendency to asceticism (as the lines from both poems above indicate) which would often have found the satisfaction of his sensuous life satiating and distasteful - a characteristic the vigorous standards of the Society of Jesus would have reinforced. In addition, the loveliness of the world has often been, or been thought to be, a danger, a temptation and a distraction from higher things for those who have given themselves to the religious life, and Hopkins seemed to have felt this danger even before he became a Jesuit: "Nov. 6 /1865/ On this day by God's grace I resolved to give

1. Poems, 11, p. 20.
2. ibid. 28, p. 52, stanza 2.

up all beauty until I had his leave for it".[1] The problem was compounded by the feeling that sensuousness perhaps could be justified if it was attached to some higher end - spiritual understanding or worship, for example - but to a man as self-aware and scrupulous as Hopkins this would have seemed often a rationalisation rather than sufficient justification. The whole matter was, to pick up another point from Robinson, a part of the prevailing moral ideal and imperative of "duty",[2] which involved a great deal of discipline and self-sacrifice. It is at least likely that Hopkins became aware of the problems his sensuous nature set for his poetry, and beyond that, the danger that poetry could become an indulgence of that nature. The religious influences he was subject to at Oxford taught him that sensuality needed to be firmly controlled and at times denied altogether, as the diary entry for 6 November 1865 (quoted above) reveals. In this regard it is significant that on at least two occasions subsequent to this Hopkins punished himself by a custody-of-the-eyes penance.[4]

A second reason can be found in the nature of the poet's studies at Oxford. When one reads both the published undergraduate essays in

1. JP. p. 71; See also Poems, 62, p. 98. cf. the following quotation from The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: "Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul; and the other things on the face of the earth were created for men's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created. Whence it follows, that man ought to make use of them just so far as they help him to attain his end, and that he ought to withdraw himself from them just so far as they hinder him". (London, Robert Scott, 1919, p. 26).

2. op. cit. pp. 1, 5-6.

3. JP. p. 71.

4. JP. p. 190, entry for 24th January, p. 249, entry for 23rd July.

Journals and Papers and the unpublished ones held at Campion Hall and Balliol College, one is struck by the breadth of his studies, their wide range and detail, but particularly by the philosophical emphasis. This emphasis meant that Hopkins had not only to think a great deal about fundamental issues in a wide range of subjects but in addition he needed to think lucidly and abstractly about highly complex matters. In other words, Oxford provided the broad but firm intellectual discipline needed to balance his well-developed affective and sensuous nature. Something of the toughening intellectual fibre can be seen in this brief poem, written in August 1864:

> It was a hard thing to undo this knot.
> The rainbow shines, but only in the thought
> Of him that looks. Yet not in that alone,
> For who makes rainbows by invention?
> And many standing round a waterfall
> See one bow each, yet not the same to all,
> But each a hand's breadth further than the next.
> The sun on falling waters writes the text
> Which yet is in the eye or in the thought.
> It was a hard thing to undo this knot.
>
> Maentwrog.[1]

Later poems show a further development, especially those often favoured for anthologies - "The Alchemist in the City",[2] "The Habit of Perfection",[3] "Heaven-Haven".[4]

1. Poems, 91, pp. 129-130.
2. ibid. 15, pp. 24-26.
3. ibid. 22, pp. 31-32.
4. ibid. 9, p. 19.

The third reason is more obvious and more important - the Jesuit training Hopkins underwent for ten years or so from 1868 to 1877. The length of the training was in itself a notable discipline, but it had above all a rigour and thoroughness which showed that even the Oxford years had been relatively undemanding. Alfred Thomas's excellent book Hopkins the Jesuit is most helpful in the light it throws on what Hopkins would have experienced during those long years of training, and I draw from it two points for emphasis.[1] First, the various courses Hopkins took during the Philosophate and Theologate were designed to give the student a broad and thorough intellectual training, and included subjects like logic, mathematics, epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy.[2] Such a curriculum would enrich and strengthen an already able mind. In addition, there were what were known as "circles", thrice weekly classes during which one student would give a résumé of the previous two lectures for fifteen minutes; thereafter two other students would attack the doctrine presented in the lecture with various objections. Everything had to be done in syllogistic form, and it is this which may be especially important. In the context of debate, syllogistic argument would have developed a supple, quick mind and a capacity to think in clear logical ways. This may partly explain why Hopkins was drawn to the sonnet, since the form lends itself to simple but powerful logical development, and why so many of his earlier mature poems have the characteristic shift from a perception of or into the world to the

1. London, O.U.P., 1969.

2. ibid. p. 93.

religious significance of what has been seen.[1] It is worth remembering that this habit of mind would have been ingrained over some six years, and would consequently have made a lasting impact. Thus, in the most significant ways, the more academic side of Hopkins's training would have given him both an enormous store of knowledge to draw on, and a finely trained mind - things which would give him the intellectual depth and strength so evident in many of the poems.

The second aspect of the Jesuit's training to which I should draw attention is the religious and spiritual discipline. Clearly this would have been given a great deal of emphasis, with daily prayers and services, examinations of conscience, confession, public exposure of faults,[2] doctrinal teaching, daily readings from spiritual books, and, above all perhaps, the Exercises of St. Ignatius. We know from stanzas 2 to 3 of The Wreck of the Deutschland that the Exercises made a profound impact on Hopkins, but it is I think true that every aspect of the Jesuit's training played an important part in shaping his mind and character. The long years under a strict daily discipline would have enabled all the different aspects of the spiritual training a long while to soak in and form the young Jesuit's mind.[3] There are three or four ways in which the religious training bears on Hopkins's poetics and I consider

1. The Italian sonnet can readily be divided into three parts in two ways, two quatrains plus sestet (perhaps the most common) or octave plus two tercets. The tripartite nature of the Ignatian meditations may also have had an influence in this regard. See as examples of poems which have a syllogistic-like logical development, "God's Grandeur", "As Kingfishers catch fire" (two quatrains and sestet) and "The Windhover" (octave plus two tercets). See also pp. 161-167.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 40.

3. See Thomas, op. cit., pp. 31-33, 91, 154-156.

them here briefly. There is first the discipline and moral excellence expected of a Jesuit - to the modern mind a remarkable ideal of self-sacrifice and the highest consistency and purity of mind - and it was transmuted in the poetic theory into the emphasis on "execution": strictness in fulfilling the demands of metre and stanzaic forms, a high order of artistic unity, and the functional nature of every element in a work. In his efforts in his poetry to idealize and unify, to make every aspect - diction, imagery, rhythm, rhyme, feeling, idea - fuse into a well-crafted, harmonious whole, he reflected the religious ideals which governed his life. One point worth stressing here is the purposive nature of each element in a poem: just as each aspect of the spiritual training tends to one purpose, namely to enable the Jesuit "to praise reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul",[1] so every part of a poem tends to one end, a beautiful and unified work of art. Nothing is extraneous, nothing there for its own sake. This partly explains the great density of Hopkins's poems - every detail is given a multi-faceted significance in the web of patterns which binds the poem together.

Secondly, Hopkins's years of training, especially those at St. Beuno's, gave him an elaborate and comprehensive theological system to draw on when he came to write his poems. There is an obvious sense in which the theology informs the poetry, but apart from the beliefs actually given or used by Hopkins to interpret his experience, there are larger presences which need to be noted. There are, for example, the modes of thought which a sophisticated intellectual system develops for itself as the need arises - for example, the logic developed by

1. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, London, Burns and Oates, 1900, p. 12.

the schoolmen - and these lie at the back of the theology, giving it an additional strength and resonance.[1] Moreover, the theology invokes all the unconsciously assumed ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes that a powerful civilisation accumulates over the centuries; the millions who live in it, multiplying and elaborating every facet of societal life, give it a rich variety, a breadth and weightiness which lie behind the religious thought of Hopkins's poems. In his case the presence is largely medieval Catholicism combined with some of the later developments of Western Christian civilization, though what is perhaps more important is the confident dogmatism and strength these structures of thought gave to Hopkins's verse.

The third point is closely connected with the last, and that is that the religious training gave him an intimate knowledge of the spiritual life, and through that, of God; the particular ethos of the Society of Jesus gave it its own character, but the reality of the experience is nevertheless clearly apparent in the poems. It is interesting to compare the last few poems (most of them religious) that Hopkins wrote before giving up poetry in 1868 with the mature poetry. The former are patently sincere and "earnest", but they lack the conviction and pressure of deeply-lived experience. John Robinson defines very well one characteristic of the young Hopkins as "otherworldly, retiring, serene" and "monastic",[2] and these qualities are prominent in some of the early poems, but this, as Robinson goes on to observe, is not their weakness:

1. See Robinson, Chapt. 2.
2. op. cit., p. 1.

> Both ["The Habit of Perfection" and "Heaven-Haven"] are attempts to supplant life with ritual, to make a religious ceremony (entry into an order) extend to cover all time. 'I have desired to go', says the nun of 'Heaven-Haven', and the implication of the juxtaposition in the poem's full title is instantaneous arrival, life arrested in a holy moment when there are no storms and all is 'out of the swing' of that sea whose turbulence and power Hopkins was to use more than once as a symbol of the capriciousness of time. It is not simply heaven the nun is intent on, it is sanctuary as well.[1]

In contrast to the sensuous asceticism and passivity of a poem like "The Habit of Perfection" the mature poetry is imbued with the feel, the tang of the real world and real experience. It has a poise, an unselfconscious assurance and a sense of the true complexity of existence and the world. This is not to say that Hopkins does not at times fall. He had a tendency to be sentimental on occasions (especially about youthful innocence), which veiled or distorted his usually clear perceptions, and the results are apparent in a poem like "The Bugler's First Communion",[2] and in some lines of "The Loss of the Eurydice":

> Him, after an hour of wintry waves,
> A schooner sights, with another, and saves,
> And he boards her in Oh! such joy
> He has lost count what came next, poor boy. - [3]

1. ibid., p. 2.
2. Poems, 48, pp. 82-83.
3. ibid., 41, p. 74, lines 69-72.

There is even something reminiscent of McGonagall in these lines when they are considered in isolation, but Hopkins rarely slipped in this way. The theology would of course have given him the framework to interpret his experience, but it did not conceal the intimate, long-nurtured knowledge of God and of the world through which he saw so much of the beauty and fearful power of God.

The discussion so far has dealt in the main with the disciplined tempering of Hopkins's natural sensuousness and intensity of feeling by a rigorous intellectual training allied with a comprehensive theological philosophical structure of belief. These go a long way towards accounting for the forceful, sometimes rigid, intellectual strength (and richness) of Hopkins's poems, but the dramatic component of the theory has not been sufficiently considered, and to this I now turn. Broadly speaking we need to look into two influences, both of which developed Hopkins's understanding of and feel for language considerably. It is I think true to say that a great deal of Hopkins's emphasis on the sound of his poems, and the need to read them "slowly, strongly marking the rhythms and fetching out the syllables",[1] is due to a sensitive native speaker's intuitive feel for the intrinsic character of the language. It is difficult to speak English with close attention to what it sounds like without being made well aware of its "heavily consonantal structure"[2] and its wide range of vowels.[3] These contribute to the way it feels on the tongue - its mellifluous flow when used in one way, with an emphasis on vowels and soft consonants, or its muscular power when used in another, with the emphasis on strong consonants, and consonant and

1. Poems, p. 263.

2. See Milroy, pp. 48-49.

3. ibid., p. 143: "Phoneticians distinguish twenty or more distinct vowel phonemes in the received pronunciation of Southern British English, as against the five or six of Italian or Spanish".

vowel rhyme. Hopkins's knowledge of Welsh may have made him far more aware of the nature of English, but it is worth remembering that he already knew a great deal in this regard before he went to Wales, as the lecture notes written at Roehampton reveal.[1] What is more likely is that his reading for those lectures and the Welsh he learnt showed him what could be achieved poetically with the language's innate character. The influences we are going to consider now went hand in hand with his ripening appreciation of the nature of language and with his developing theory of poetry. Interwoven as they were with the experiences mentioned above, they played an appreciable part in the poet's development.

I take the less important one first, and that is the strongly verbal world Hopkins inhabited during his training as a Jesuit. The training Hopkins received included preaching, elocution lessons, listening to someone reading a spiritual book during meals, the hearing and giving of lectures, the reading of papers at the "English Academy" during his Philosophate, debating, and various entertainments or "seances" as they were called.[2] The interesting characteristic about these activities is that in one way or another, they all involve a certain degree of formality in the act of communication - the situation is typically one of an individual speaking to a group, though of course it was a group who knew each other well, and there would have been a degree of intimacy mixed in with the formality. This is a significant point, since Hopkins's poems often have a marked formality in their structure but a lyric

1. JP. pp. 267-290.

2. Father Thomas scrupulously notes all these and other activities throughout his book, hence I have given no specific references. See also the earlier comments on the verbal emphasis in Hopkins's training on page 152.

intimacy of tone and require an unusual kind of appreciative response. The significance of this will be discussed more fully later. It would be difficult to prove any direct connection between the activities mentioned above and the character of the poems, but it is not impossible that the atmosphere of the communities Hopkins lived in sank deeply into his mind and helped to mould the unusual character of his poetry.

In the same connection, there are two or three other points to be made. First, a great part of the training given to Jesuits - as the activities noted above testify to - lays stress on speech. It may be formal language, but the emphasis is on its being spoken. Milroy points out that Hopkins was like his contemporaries in philology in insisting "on the primacy of speech" in language,[1] and it is certain that what he experienced in training would have reinforced his sense that spoken language was primary and had a vividness and individuality which made it the ideal medium for poetry. The periods of silence the novices had to observe from time to time would also have reinforced this belief.[2] A second point concerns the two times when Hopkins suddenly and unexpectedly - even to himself - began to sob while he was listening to a refectory reading.[3] Hopkins's explanation for one occasion is typically unusual, but none the less satisfying:

> But neither the weight nor the stress of sorrow, that is to say of the thing which should cause sorrow, by themselves move us or bring the tears as a sharp knife does not cut for being pressed as long as it is pressed without any shaking of the hand but there is always one

1. pp. 39-40.
2. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 27, 29, 32, 35, 49, 57, 172.
3. JP., pp. 195, 218.

> touch, something striking sideways and unlooked for, which in both cases undoes resistance and pierces, and this may be so delicate that the pathos seems to have gone directly to the body and cleared the understanding in its passage.[1]

Again, this is a point too speculative to prove with any certainty, but it is also not impossible that Hopkins was impressed by the power words have, not only in moving us in a conscious way, but in their capacity for delicately "striking sideways" and releasing the coiled spring of our feelings, in much the same way that a smell or a song can release a disproportionate flood of feelings and memories. It is interesting that the mechanism is the same in these cases: a sensory perception, through a strong personal association, evokes a powerful emotional and physical response, and Hopkins exploits it effectively in his poetry.

The most important point that needs to be made, however, about the emphasis on speech and verbal communication generally in the training of a Jesuit in the nineteenth century is that to a significant extent it placed Hopkins in a pre-print and pre-Ramist frame of reference. In Chapter 2 some consideration was given to the radical changes printing and Ramism made to the European mind, in particular the changes in epistemology, ontology, and the modes of thought available. These changes had meant that knowledge and thought, which had been for centuries personal, communal, were slowly separated from people, from communities, from the daily experience which gave their knowledge and understanding a living force, and became objective and complete in themselves. Hopkins's training would have involved some of these consequences, but on the other the personal and oral emphasis given to so many of his activities would

1. ibid., p. 195.

have fostered and ingrained over many years something of the cast of mind which had existed before print and Ramism had developed in Europe, and in turn this would have exerted considerable influence on Hopkins's views about the origins and essential nature of poetry; the opinion given in the letter to Everard that poetry was originally recited reveals how fully he accepted the oral and communal character of poetry.

About the second influence we can be much surer, since Louis Martz's fine book The Poetry of Meditation explores the whole matter very thoroughly[1] and includes some illuminating discussion of Hopkins in relation to what Martz defines as the meditative tradition in English poetry. As a Jesuit Hopkins would have frequently meditated using the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and the influence of this practice on Hopkins was considerable. Reading The Poetry of Meditation one is struck over and over again with the way comments about seventeenth century poetry - Donne's in particular - apply to Hopkins. Martz makes clear that there are a great many important ways in which the meditative practices of the seventeenth century affected the poetry of the period, and though it would be most instructive to follow up a number of these, it is sufficient to examine here two or three of the most relevant points.

In his discussion of the development and influence of meditative practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Martz notes that:

> ... the enormous popularity of methodical meditation in the era may be attributed to the fact that it satisfied and developed a natural fundamental tendency of the human mind - a tendency to work from a particular situation, through analysis of that situation, and finally to some sort of resolution of the problems which the situation has presented. Meditation focused and disciplined the powers that a man already possessed, both his innate

1. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1954.

> powers and his acquired modes of logical analysis and rhetorical development.[1]

Those familiar with poems like The Wreck of the Deutschland, "The Windhover" and "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" will immediately recognise how closely Hopkins's poetic technique follows the pattern described above. The meditative process was of course much more involved, and it is worth sketching it in.[2] It began, naturally, with a short prayer, followed by a "composition of place", that is, the exercitant in his mind's eye constructed a picture of the place where he would see what he would meditate on - the lost in hell, or Christ preaching, healing, being crucified, and so on. The composition of place was detailed, imaginative and vivid, creating in the mind of the exercitant an excited, or disturbed, emotional state and a receptivity to what was to follow.[3] Then followed the meditation proper, during which the "three powers of the soul"[4] - memory, understanding, and will - were applied to the subject of the meditation; memory to call it up, understanding to analyse and expose its meaning and the significance it had for the exercitant, will to move the affections to a greater obedience and praise of God. Finally the exercitant prayed to God aloud, evaluating himself and his actions in the light of the meditation, and comparing himself to Christ, seeking for help in view of his failures, vowing to strive

1. ibid., p. 39.
2. The Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius, pp. 20-23; Martz, op. cit., pp. 25-39.
3. The Spiritual Exercises. "The second will be to hear with the ears of the imagination the wailings, the howlings, the cries, the blasphemies against Christ our Lord and against all His saints. The third will be to smell the smoke, the sulphur, the filth, and the putrid matter". p. 27.
4. ibid., p. 22.

more earnestly in the future. The practice of meditation was clearly a very disciplined, intense exercise involving all the faculties of the exercitant. As far as Hopkins's poetic theory is concerned, there are two ways in particular in which the meditative method had a conclusive part to play, and I take these in turn.

The first is the "unification of sensibility" engendered by the meditations. Some of St. Ignatius's specific instructions show how it was encouraged:

> I say to bring to memory the sin of the angels, how they were created in grace, yet not willing to help themselves by the means of their liberty in the work of paying reverence and obedience to their Creator and Lord, falling into pride, they were changed from grace into malice, and hurled from Heaven to Hell; and then in turn to reason more in particular with the understanding, and this in turn to move still more the affections by means of the will.[1]
>
> ... and in turn with the understanding to discuss all this, making more especially use of the will ...[2]

Although the meditation is divided into three exercises, each ostensibly involving one of the powers of the soul, St. Ignatius encourages that all the powers be active during the period when the will is pre-eminently at work. The integrative effect on the exercitant must have been profound, especially when, as St. Ignatius lays down on two occasions, he applies the senses to what he is meditating upon, in one case on hell,[3]

1. ibid., pp. 21-22.
2. ibid., p. 22.
3. ibid., pp. 26-27.

and in the other on the mysteries of Christ's life.[1] The "application of the senses" to events already meditated upon in depth fused the whole experience in a remarkably vivid way. Martz makes the point well:

> It should produce a hitherto unparalleled integration of feeling and thought, of sensuous detail and theological abstraction.[2]

> It [the Jesuit manner] is a manner which deliberately evokes a subtle fusion of passion and thought, of concrete imagery and theological abstraction, presented in a sequence of articulated, climactic structure: all arising from the central effort to comprehend the Godhead and the manhood of Christ simultaneously and without separation, to feel and to know the fact of the Incarnation with every faculty that man can muster.[3]

Such a deliberate arousal of all man's faculties to a high level of intensity would have had important consequences for the meditators. Sometimes, as Hopkins tells us in the opening of The Wreck of the Deutschland, the exercitant found himself as it were almost face to face with his God, in terrible power and love; but even when such an experience did not take place, we can imagine how deep its impact would have been. The vivid images created by the awakened imagination, enriched by the understanding and quickened by the affections, would sink down into the very cells and being of the mind; the abstractions of belief would be brightly lit by the vivid sensory grasp of the living reality of those abstractions, and a wholeness of vision achieved. The aim of meditation

1. ibid., 40-41.
2. Martz, op. cit., p. 79.
3. ibid., p. 83.

was "devotion"[1] or "contemplative affection":[2] "contemplation beholdes the object it loves, in one simple and recollected look, and the consideration so united, causeth a more lively and strong emotion".[3] Out of the disparate and perhaps tumultuous experience of meditation, the exercitant arrives at a point of repose, of purity and singleness of feeling and thought.

Even a fairly superficial reading of Hopkins's mature poems will confirm the unifying impulse in him - he constantly strives to understand all that can be understood about the matter in hand, he yearns to see it all whole and to convey it as a unified vision. There is perhaps little new or remarkable in this, except the passion with which it was held, but what is noteworthy is the effect it had on the poetry. There are rarely moments when it has almost pure philosophical or theological argument, or a vague or uprooted feeling, or an image used for its own sake. The poems have every element welded into one another - they are a fusion of thought, feeling and image so complete that they must be recognised as being a very different order of experience from our usual ones, and perhaps from most of the experiences available to us. Every element informs and enriches the others, emerging as they do from a unique singleness of vision - in Martz's words the meditative poetry had "above all, including all, that 'unification of sensibility' which could achieve 'a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling', and made it possible for Donne [and Hopkins] to feel his thought 'as immediately as the odour of a

1. ibid., p. 15.
2. St. Francois de Sales, quoted by Martz, ibid., p. 18.
3. St. Francois de Sales; ibid., p. 17.

rose'."[1] Donne and Hopkins wrote, in this respect, the same type of poetry, in which thought and feeling have an evocative sensuous quality. However in Hopkins's case the matter may have been compounded by his acute sense of the sounds of words, of the rich patterns they could be shaped into, and above all, of their firm hold on both our mental and sensory faculties. As I noted earlier, for Hopkins a word is the uttering of an idea, which in turn is composed of a mental conception and may also be associated with an image. It is therefore highly likely that Hopkins's experience in meditation confirmed and expanded his earlier observations about language; combined they helped to create a poetry which sounded a new note in Victorian England:[3]

We lash with the best or worst
Word last! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
Gush! - flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,
Brim, in a flash, full! - Hither then, last or first,
To hero of Calvary, Christ's feet -
Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it - men go.[4]

1. ibid., p. 2. The quotations come from T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", Selected Essays, 1917-1923, New York, Harcourt and Brace, 1932, p. 245-248, and Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, Ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921, p. xxxiv.

2. JP. p. 125.

3. Martz suggests that in the seventeenth century, "meditation seems to have coalesced with strictly poetical traditions of the Renaissance" and produced in the process a unique poetry of meditation. pp. 22-23. In the same way, in Hopkins the practice of meditation coalesced with the poetic traditions of Romanticism and helped to produce a kind of poetry which by Victorian standards was most out of the ordinary.

4. Poems, 28, stanza 8, p. 54.

The second way in which the practice of meditation almost certainly influenced the poetic theory was the effect of the colloquies which ended each meditation. Martz points out that Coleridge's description of the Imagination is, without any changes, "a perfect definition of the soul in successful meditation",[1] and adds that it "is no surprise, then, to find the Jesuit Puente describing the ultimate goal of meditation in terms of poetical kinds, adapting the passage of Ephesians (5: 18-20) which our period constantly used to justify the writing of religious poetry".[2] The state of contemplation following successful meditation must inevitably have moved many to an abundant outpouring of all that was in their minds and hearts, and in any poetically gifted person the words would have had, or in that state would seem to have had, a peculiar beauty and power. This may well have influenced Hopkins - a remark like "The Hurrahing sonnet was the outcome of half an hour of extreme enthusiasm as I walked home alone one day from fishing in the Elwy"[3] suggests that at times Hopkins may have composed in a mental state like that of contemplation, and which possibly had been fostered by meditation. In any event the language arising from such experiences would have expressed, in the tones and structures of normal speech, the most transfiguring moments of consciousness, and the power of the spoken word must have been impressed deeply on the minds of the exercitants if they paused to consider it.

A further point in this connection concerns the character of the colloquy. St. Ignatius gives details of how this should be done:

1. op. cit., p. 68.
2. ibid., p. 69.
3. LRB. p. 56.

> The colloquy is made properly by speaking as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant to his master; at one time asking for some favour, at another blaming oneself for some evil committed, now informing him of one's affairs, and seeking counsel in them.[1]

The relationship suggested is of a close familiar companionship, and the tone would be intimate and spontaneous. Perhaps most significantly the habit of speaking naturally and frankly to God would have been ingrained, and speech would have been more and more identified as the lively intermediary or medium for communicating every detail of a person's life to a loved and loving God. Thus speech could be recognised as a vital, an almost living link (since it occurred in an unusually heightened state of mind) between a man and God. The habit this formed was carried over into the poems and is a natural element in their make-up. A glance through the poems reveals how often they are spoken directly and simply to someone - God, some character in the dramatic situation, or us as readers, or to some unspecified person - or to some natural object - the felled poplars[2] or the "world-mothering air" for example.[3] It may be suggested that this is true for much lyric poetry and there is little remarkable in this, but there are other considerations. The Romantic and Victorian eras were interesting in that the poet, as I note elsewhere,[4] became increasingly isolated, and his poems grew to be self-communings, addressed to no-one in particular and not demanding or appearing to demand a reader, whereas Hopkins directs his poems at

1. op. cit., p. 23.
2. Poems 43, p. 78.
3. ibid., 60, p. 93.
4. See pp. 45-47.

a living reader and demands that he be closely, intensely engaged. Even in those poems spoken to somebody or something else, the nature of the poems is such that they vigorously assert their need for a reader to complete them. A second point is that Hopkins's poems have a characteristic tone - there is no posturing, no affectation of a conventional poetic tone - rather a natural ease and directness, the fruit probably of many years of intimate contact with men in close communities and with God, both day by day and in the solitude of retreats.

There remain three matters which require some comment - Hopkins's experiments with drama, especially as an undergraduate, his interest in music, and the significance for Hopkins of the Prologue to John's Gospel - and these I take in turn.

While at Oxford Hopkins attempted two plays,[1] besides a number of dramatic monologues;[2] some of the latter are competent and interesting poems, but the former are on the whole rather poor, with a strong, one might almost say overpowering, Shakespearian influence, wooden dialogues and weak characterisation:

Valerian, Daphnis

V. Come, Daphnis.
D. Good Valerian, I will come. (exit V.
Why should I go because Castara goes?
I do not, but to please Valerian.
But why then should Castara weigh with me?

1. Floris in Italy, Poems 102, pp. 143-147, Castara Victrix. ibid., 127.
2. For example "A Vision of the Mermaids", Poems 2, "A Soliloquy of One of the Spies left in the Wilderness", ibid., 5, "Pilate", ibid., 80, "A Voice from the World", ibid., 81.

D. Why, there's an interest and sweet soul in beauty
Which makes us eye-attentive to the eye
That has it;[1]

Perhaps the weakest aspect of Hopkins's early attempts at drama is the influence of Shakespeare, and it is an influence still strong many years later when he came to write St. Winefred's Well:

Enter Teryth from riding, Winefred following.

T. What is it, Gwen, my girl? | why do you hover and haunt me?
W. You came by Caerwys, sir? |
T. I came by Caerwys.
W. There
Some messenger there might have | met you from my uncle.
T. Your uncle met the messenger - | met me; and this the message:
Lord Beuno comes tonight. |
W. Tonight sir!
T. Soon now: therefore
Have all things ready in his room. |
W. There needs but little doing.
T. Let what there needs be done. | Stay! with him one companion,
His deacon, Dirvan. Warm | twice over must the welcome be,
But both will share one cell.— | This was good news Gwenvrewi.[2]

1. Poems, 125, p. 167.

2. Poems, 152, pp. 187-188.

Hopkins's gifts as a dramatic poet were not very great, but what is perhaps more important is that his attempts to write drama reveal that he, along with many of his contemporaries, felt the lack of a living contemporary poetic drama, and his great effort on St. Winefred's Well is an attempt to find the form for it. It could be argued too that the dramatic impulse, which seems to be as native and spontaneous in man as poetry or music, found some outlet for its thwarted energy in Hopkins's lyric poems, and there may be some evidence for this in a point I discuss at some length later, the "counterpointing" of different voices in the poems,[1] and also, in the case of The Wreck of the Deutschland, in the number of different people spoken to, which makes the Deutschland in effect a kind of monodrama.

The discussion so far has been fairly speculative, as it must be in the absence of any certain - preferably autobiographical - evidence. Nevertheless we can be surer in suggesting that Hopkins's experience of writing drama had its value in other ways, especially in his perceptive remarks about drama which he made to Bridges from time to time - his idea that drama must "bid", his distinction between an "end-hung" and a "centre-hung" play,[2] his remark that the "drama ought to grow up with its audience";[3] these suggest that he had a sense of what drama ought to be, and in its own way this influenced his poetic practice.

About music, we can be rather more certain. Hopkins started to learn the piano before he began writing poetry again,[4] and it is certain from his remarks about sprung rhythm that music played an important

1. See Chapt. 9.
2. LRB. pp. 209-210.
3. ibid., p. 255.
4. FL. p. 238. Letter dated December 3, 1872.

part in his thinking about rhythm generally and sprung rhythm in particular. Broadly speaking there are two important ways in which music influenced the poetry - in the practice of sprung rhythm, and in his general theoretical basis for art. A chapter on Hopkins's rhythms follows, so I need not comment at length here. The obvious point is his adoption of a musical form of scansion, taking quite arbitrarily the beginning of the foot as the stress, whatever the movement of the verse.[1] He was fully aware that this was a convention and probably felt that it was no more arbitrary than the usual way of scanning. Far more important though is the question of time in music and in sprung rhythm. He stressed that in sprung rhythm the feet are assumed to be equal in length or strength,[2] and this probably arose from his clear understanding that without the fixed number of syllables and regular pattern of stress and slack that common rhythm has, sprung rhythm needed alliterative linking and some kind of strict equality in the feet to make it more than a prose rhythm. It is I think true that in the poems in sprung rhythm, even the early ones (with the exception of some passages from the Deutschland where a regular counted rhythm breaks in[3]), we are far more conscious that time is being controlled, that the positions of the stressed and slack syllables are falling in a pattern which enriches the sense of the line, as in

> ... in his riding
> Of the rólling level úndernéath him steady áir,[4]

1. Poems, p. 45.
2. ibid., pp. 47-48.
3. Stanzas 3 and 4, for example.
4. Poems 36, p. 69.

It is perhaps significant that after 1881, when the poet found it increasingly difficult to write poetry and he turned more and more to music,[1] the poems become more and more like scores, with directions for performance given in more detail,[2] large numbers of diacritic marks, (some taken from or derived from music[3]), and even in one case a time signature of a sort, since he told Bridges that "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" was "most carefully timed in tempo rubato."[4] If my ear serves me right the later poems in sprung rhythm have a far more subtle, careful and delicate control of time than earlier ones, and indicate just how much Hopkins had developed his rhythm. It is therefore a reasonable conclusion that Hopkins's musical interests and training (rudimentary though the latter was) developed and refined an already acute ear, and had an important influence on the development of sprung rhythm.

The second way in which music influenced Hopkins was its intrinsic nature, for in music he found an art which pre-eminently is an art of performance. However good a sight-reader one may be, and however vivid one's musical imagination, there is no substitute for actually performing the music. In the light of his theory of language and meaning, music and poetry must have seemed to him exactly parallel in this regard, but in addition there was the whole question of a "living art".[5] As I noted in Chapter 4, music and poetry live in two, or even three senses: in performance, in the peculiar atmosphere between a performer and his audience, and in the relationship which exists between an artist and

1. LRB. p. 124.
2. Poems 62, p. 285; 70, p. 291; 71, pp. 292-3.
3. Poems 71, p. 293, for example.
4. Poems 61, p. 284.
5. LRB. p. 246.

his age, where his work, like drama, grows up with its audience. In Hopkins's case, the second instance may not apply except in one or two unique instances,[1] and the third came much later. This leaves the first, and it is clear from his remarks about the performance of his poems, his diacritic marks, the marking of phrases with rallentando or staccato,[2] and the poetry itself, that he knew his verse was only completed or fulfilled when it came alive in the human voice and mind, just as music only finds its real significance in the touch of the human hand or breath upon the instrument. Music consequently gave Hopkins not only a bulwark for his rhythm and help in the form of various marks, ideas and so on, but provided him with a model of the kind of art he felt to be the true form of art. Here was a precedent, an authority, a living vindication of his theoretical developments, and it is hardly surprising that in Hopkins poetry and music come very close together at times.

Lastly we consider the Prologue to John's Gospel. The description of Christ as the Word of God has always been thought of as one of the most remarkable and important statements of the New Testament. Its power lies partly in the enormous breadth of its appeal to men of every kind and culture, from the simplest peasant to the most erudite philosopher, and to a man of Hopkins's training and cast of mind, its significance must have been considerable. Leaving aside some of the more obscure and philosophical ramifications, one thing does stand out. Man is the only creature who has language in any real sense of the word, and since

1. The Wreck of the Deutschland, "Harry Ploughman" for example. See Chapt. 10.

2. Poems 32, 33, 34, 35. It is interesting that though these poems have sprung openings, they are not in sprung rhythm, which suggests that in common rhythm too GMH was aware of the possibilities of time, though it is also true that these are directives for performance rather than a formal metrical principle.

in the Jewish and Christian traditions he is the pinnacle of the visible creation, the creature to whom authority over the earth and its creatures was given, there is something peculiarly significant about the fact that he can give rich expression to his own experience, that being free and conscious he has a language to praise his Creator or villify Him. The fact of language brings home several truths about man and God which Hopkins took up in his poetics and poetry. As Christ manifested the Father, so in a similar way man can fulfil his nature by using language to praise and serve His God, showing forth God's presence in the world:

> Ah! there was a heart right!
> There was a single eye!
> Read the unshapeable shock night
> And knew the who and the why;
> Wording it how but by him that present and past,
> Heaven and earth are word of, worded by? - [1]

Furthermore, as the creature in whom a special kind of authority is vested, man has a responsibility to use his language on behalf of the creation:

> And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
> Else, but in dear and dogged man? - [2]

There is an important sense in which the creation of poetry made to be uttered aloud fulfils a unique side of man's nature and purpose; for Hopkins this would be especially the case in those instances where news

1. The Wreck of the Deutschland, Poems 28, p. 61, stanza 29.
2. Poems 58, p. 9.

of God is brought, or, as Hopkins does on several occasions, the cares and praises of the creation are shaped into language, and man for a moment speaks on behalf of the creation, as he was intended to do. In this way what has come from God through the Word is brought back to Him in the utterance of the creature.

Part III

The Living Art

The true artist will accept and even strengthen his conditions, because Art shews that perfection is only in this way attainable, and that man's faculties deliver their strongest blows thus concentrated; ....

Perhaps too there is a third sort who have not so fully accepted their conditions of working and have tried to express in their art what cd. never be expressed in that art or in any art at all, whose failure has greater charm or grandeur than the success of others; ....

GMH, from an unpublished undergraduate essay, "On the true idea and excellence of sculpture", MS D V, p. 1, held in Campion Hall.

CHAPTER 7

The New Rhythms

> Sprung rhythm gives back to poetry its true soul and self. As poetry is emphatically speech, speech purged of dross like gold in the furnace, so it must have emphatically the essential elements of speech. Now emphasis itself, stress, is one of these: sprung rhythm makes verse stressy; it purges it to an emphasis as much brighter, livelier, more lustrous than the regular but commonplace emphasis of common rhythm as poetry in general is brighter than common speech.[1]

There are few critics of Hopkins who have not had a tilt of one kind or another at the problem of Sprung Rhythm (or of Hopkins's rhythms in general), and it is not a little disconcerting to find that what the poet himself described as "a simple thing"[2] (at least in theory) should be seen in such completely contradictory ways. There are studies like W. H. Gardner's, which take Hopkins's theorising seriously and treat Sprung Rhythm as a metrical system needing complex prosodic analysis to elucidate it, while in complete contrast one can find a study like Paull F. Baum's, whose conclusion is that "Sprung Rhythm is not a form of verse, to be scanned by feet, but a form of Prose Rhythm not amenable to scansion and therefore not to be explained as verse".[3] One can find a good range of views between these extremes: some treat Sprung Rhythm as a metrical system, but find the theory and the practice

1. TLS., op. cit., column 3.
2. FL., p. 335.
3. "Sprung Rhythm", PMLA., Vol. 74, Part 1, Sept. 1959, p. 424.

contradictory, and even distasteful;[1] some find the theory unhelpful and the practice successful;[2] and there are others who find the poems rhythmically highly successful in many instances and the theory illuminating, but not an altogether credible set of propositions.[3] Clearly, Sprung Rhythm by itself presents some acute problems, and when one considers not only Hopkins's use of common rhythm, but the difficult business of describing English rhythms at all, the problems seem severe indeed. Some of these problems are of our own making, because we have developed methods of prosodic analysis so sophisticated, and capable of making such fine distinctions, that we cannot see the wood for the trees, and are burdened by an unwieldy terminology. Nevertheless, Hopkins's rhythms continue to be given considerable critical attention, since on the one hand they seem to resist critical definition, and on the other they are recognised as being a singular achievement. Indeed Hopkins's status as a major poet is owing in part to the general recognition of the originality and success of Sprung Rhythm; F. R. Leavis described him as "one of the most remarkable technical inventors who ever wrote",[4] and W. H. Gardner fixed on Hopkins's style and rhythms as a particular reason for his worth as a poet: " ... he is one of the acknowledged masters of original style - one of the few strikingly successful innovators

1. Y. Winters, "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins", The Function of Criticism, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, pp. 103-156.

2. For example, I. M. van Noppen. Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Wreck of the Deutschland, Meppel, Krips Repro, 1980, Chapt. 5.

3. For example, S. Walliser. That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection. A Case Study in G. M. Hopkins's Poetry. Berne, Francke Verlag, 1977, Chapt. 4.

4. "Gerard Manley Hopkins", Hopkins (Ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman), Englewood Cliffs N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966, p. 17. Essay originally published in New Bearings in English Poetry, London, Chatto and Windus, 1932.

in poetic language and rhythm".[1] To be fair, not all critics have given so high an estimate to the poet's achievement in this area, Yvor Winters for example finding his rhythms forced, "violent" and almost impossible to read as Hopkins suggested they should be.[2] But it is no coincidence that what has been recognised by many critics as a remarkable rhythmic theory and practice is also central to my general arguments about the nature of Hopkins's poetry: its dramatic character is directly related to the rhythms Hopkins used, and this underlines the importance of what he was trying to achieve in his poetry. The purpose of this chapter is therefore twofold: to describe Hopkins's metrical theory and the rhythms themselves, suggesting how they relate to the sense, and to the general poetic theory; and to indicate the ways in which the rhythms contribute to the dramatic character of the poems. The first part of the chapter will deal mainly with Sprung Rhythm (although many of the principles outlined for Sprung Rhythm are equally true of common rhythm), while the second will discuss Hopkins's use of common and of "mixed" rhythms (that is, common rhythm combined with sprung rhythms).

I would like to begin by clearing the ground with a few essential preliminary definitions. These are mainly drawn from Hopkins's own writings, and although some are self-evident, I mention them because they prevent misunderstandings of what Hopkins was about, and help to refute those critics who, like Paull F. Baum, argue that Sprung Rhythm is not a verse but a prose rhythm.

1. "Introduction" to Gerard Manley Hopkins, Selected Poems and Prose, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1963, p. xiii.

2. op. cit., pp. 112, 117, 123.

The stress Hopkins placed on the naturalness of Sprung Rhythm,[1] and the times in his poems when he successfully uses speaking rhythms - for example, in "Felix Randal the farrier, O is he dead then? my duty all ended"[2] - have led his rhythms to be mistaken as "a form of Prose Rhythm", to quote Baum again. But in several places, early and late, Hopkins draws clear distinctions between the rhythms of prose and of poetry. "On the Origin of Beauty", written in 1865, has one such distinction: "If therefore by poetry you understand all verse, we may define it as differing from prose by having a continuous and regular artificial structure .... "[3] (At this stage of the discussion the Professor is busy making various other distinctions between prose and poetry of different kinds, but these need not delay us.) In August 1877, writing of Milton's rhythms, he wrote, "whereas Milton's mounted rhythm is a real poetical rhythm, having its own laws and recurrence, but further embarrassed by having to count".[4] Some five years later, in October 1882, he is making the same distinction: "Extremes meet, and (I must for truth's sake say what sounds pride) this savagery of his [Whitman's] art, this rhythm in its last ruggedness and decomposition into common prose, comes near the last elaboration of mine. For that piece of mine ["The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo"[5]] is very highly wrought. The long lines are not rhythm run to seed: everything is weighed and timed in them".[6] Throughout his life Hopkins consistently thought of poetic

1. LRB. p. 46.
2. Poems, 53, p. 86.
3. JP. p. 107.
4. LRB. p. 46.
5. Poems, 59, p. 91.
6. LRB. p. 157.

rhythms as significantly different from those of prose, as having their own laws and character - needing to be sufficiently like ordinary spoken language to gain the advantages of naturalness and power of expression, but unlike enough to give a poem "the concentration, the intensity"[1] of a complex but highly unified and resonant order - what Winifred Nowottny so aptly calls "language at full stretch".[2] Hopkins therefore was fully aware of the differences between poetic and prose rhythms, and felt strongly that it was essential for poetry to have "a real poetical rhythm". This explains why Hopkins always insisted that Sprung Rhythm was a metrical or poetic rhythm and not a prose one; we risk making a serious critical error if we claim otherwise, since it is hardly likely that a man as intelligent or as knowledgeable as Hopkins could have made so gross an error. It is true, I think, that his metrical explanations are not always satisfactory, and that the rhythms themselves are often difficult to explain consistently, but it is a misapprehension to conclude from these that "There is no metrical substructure; sprung rhythm is pure rhythm. In recitation the rhythmic units are isochronous or at least give the impression of being isochronous".[3] (This particular quotation is remarkably confused. We may well ask what "pure rhythm" is - if it exists - though I suspect prose rhythm is what is meant. And even more strange, van Noppen denies a metrical substructure in Sprung Rhythm, and then immediately concedes one in isochronism.) As I argue later, Sprung Rhythm is a metrical system, and we are probably nearer the truth if we accept, rather tentatively at this stage, that

1. JP., p. 108.
2. The Language Poets Use, p. 123.
3. M. J. van Noppen, op cit., p. 76.

it was a metrical system which the prosodic theories and terminology of his day could not fully explain, and consequently we have the proliferation of terms and explanations as Hopkins worked out the principles and licences of his new rhythm.

Another important distinction - important because Hopkins uses one different from the modern distinction - is that between rhythm and metre. Hopkins first defines these in "On the Origin of Beauty",[1] but his definitions (substantially the same) are clearer in "Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric - Verse",[2] so I use the latter: "The repetition of feet, the same or mixed, without regard to how long, is rhythm. Metre is the grouping of a certain number of feet. There is no metre in prose though there may be rhythm".[3] One can make much of these definitions but a few observations are sufficient here. Firstly, it is important to note the simple distinction between metre and rhythm - merely a matter of regulating the number of feet. There is, in terms of the nature of the feet in the two, no difference: nominally they are considered the same. Nowadays we more often think of the rhythm as the spoken or expressional pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables, and the metre as the abstract pattern which controls and interacts with the rhythm. However, with Hopkins we can in most instances assume that where he uses "rhythm" he has the current meaning of "metre" in mind, and where he uses "metre", he is referring to line length and stanzaic structure. I will use "rhythm" and "metre" in the senses understood today, but in addition I will also use terms like "recitation stress",[4] and "performance" or "expressional rhythm" to describe the rhythms with more accuracy.

1. JP., pp. 100-101.
2. ibid., pp. 267-288.
3. ibid., p. 273.
4. See Poems, p. 285.

The second point is that it is clear in Hopkins's mind that rhythm is based on two things - the foot, which he earlier defined as "two or more syllables, running to as many as four or five, grouped about one strong beat"[1] - and repetition. These are points I come back to in detail later, but it is interesting that he does not say whether a mixed or logaoedic rhythm requires the different feet to be repeated in a fixed order or freely varied, but he does consider a rhythm composed of mixed feet as a rhythm, though less regular and using a different principle from the rhythms which repeat the same foot. This is useful to bear in mind, since Sprung Rhythm is essentially a logaoedic one and consequently its principles are rather more unusual than those of the simpler rhythms.

A third point we might note (and this is made rather tentatively) is that because Hopkins tended to think of what we call metre as rhythm (that is, he thought of rhythms in nominal terms rather than the actual ones), we should make the necessary allowances for this before we find his descriptions of his rhythms wanting. He lived very easily with the fiction that a foot is the same in length and stress wherever it occurs in a poem; what mattered to him was that the syllables of a foot should adequately fulfil the requirements of the metre (for example the pattern of stress and slack in a trochaic measure), even though the actual sounds and relative strengths of the stressed and unstressed syllables differ markedly from one another.[2] Modern linguistics and prosodic analysis have made us so aware of the many differences between what are assumed to be the same rhythmic pattern and of the different ways of

1. JP., p. 271.

2. cf. "It [the foot] has the same sequence of accentuation, but illustrated in different syllables". ibid., p. 101.

realising a line in recitation that we forgot how little these differences meant to poets of Hopkins's generation. The differences were acknowledged and valued as adding to the beauty of the verse by their variety and interaction with the metre, but these things were to be balanced by careful attention to the metre's demands. They had their eyes on a fairly abstract and defining rhythmic frame, which distinguished in general terms one metric pattern or system from another. This idea cannot be pressed too far, since Hopkins's metrical marks are in some cases describing both the metre and the way to read a line,[1] but it is helpful insofar as it explains the poet's ready assumptions about Sprung Rhythm (for example, of equal length or strength in a foot), and also the arbitrariness of his scansion systems, about which I will say more later. For the present, it is reasonable for us to make the kind of allowances I have suggested. They will prevent or remove some unnecessary misunderstandings of Sprung Rhythm, and facilitate our discussions of a complex matter.

In the dialogue "On the Origins of Beauty" (1865) Hopkins discusses rhythm as a necessary part of the beauty of a poem, and hence rhythm also fulfils the laws for beauty which the Dialogue works out at some length. These laws or principles are fundamental to Hopkins's metrical theory and practice, and it is essential that they be examined. In order to give some indication of the development of these ideas, I propose to trace their growth from the poet's early years at Oxford to later periods in his life.

In the earliest of the extant undergraduate essays published in Journals and Papers, "On the Signs of Health and Decay in the Arts" (1863?)

1. For example, the outrides and the dwell – ⌒

Hopkins first suggests the idea that beauty exists in a "comparison, the enforcement of likeness and unlikeness, the enforcement of relation...."[1] He refines this idea by showing that too much likeness or unlikeness in the relation mars the beauty, hence beauty lies not only in a relation, but in the proportion of likeness and unlikeness in the relation, a "golden mean" being necessary to produce what is "just and pleasurable".[2] The next part of the essay delineates two forms in which this proportion can exist - either "by interval or continuance".[3] The distinction defines on the one hand a transition between two things which is clearly and abruptly marked off, and on the other a gradual transition, with each element flowing into the next, so that it is impossible to say where one ends and the other begins. The latter Hopkins called "chromatic"[4] in this essay, and to the former he later applied the term "diatonic"[5]. This distinction is important, for Hopkins's grasp of it at this stage of his life enabled him not only to use these kinds of relationships in his art, but gave to his mind a characteristic mould, an unconscious predisposition to conceive his experience, his faith and the natural world in these terms. He favoured the diatonic relation on the whole, particularly after he read Duns Scotus in the summer of 1872, since the Scholastic confirmed for him the unique identity of every created thing. If something is unique, there could be no gradual transition from it to another object - it is sharply delineated from everything else.[6]

1. ibid., p. 75.
2. ibid.
3. ibid., p. 76.
4. ibid.
5. ibid., p. 104.
6. For a discussion of these points see J. Hillis Miller, op cit.

We can judge the importance of this "intervallary" vision of Hopkins's poetry in a phrase like "abrupt self" in "Henry Purcell",[1] and in a poem as late as "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (1885) it appears as the central image of the oracle of human life, and judgement:

> Only the beakleaved boughs dragonish | damask the tool-smooth bleak light; black
> Ever so black on it. Our tale, O our oracle! | Let life, wáned, ah lét life wind
> Off hér once skéined stained véined variety | upon, áll on twó spools; párt, pen, páck
> Now her áll in twó flocks, twó folds - black, white; | right, wrong; ...[2]

These early ideas receive considerable development and underpinning in the essays that follow, but most particularly in "The Origin of our Moral Ideas"[3] (1864/5?) and "On the Origin of Beauty". In the latter we find again beauty defined as a relation, "and the apprehension of it a comparison".[4] There are three important emphases in these which require some comment. The first of these is the stress on the naturalness of the laws of beauty as Hopkins defines them. Thus in the later essay, a chestnut-fan is used to reveal the principles of beauty, and they are found to be present in art as well: "'And the beauty of rhythm is traced to the same causes as that of the chestnut-fan, is it not so?'"[5] Rhythm, metre (in Hopkins's sense), rhyme, and other such structuring

1. Poems, 45, p. 80.
2. ibid., 61, p. 98.
3. JP. pp. 80-83.
4. ibid., p. 95.
5. ibid., p. 101.

devices are employing laws which are not of man's making, but which inhere in the created order, and are thus natural laws. Art is therefore imitation, though the imitation is of course not a blind copying but a vigorous creative art.[1] The significance of this extends well beyond the mere creation of beauty in art, since, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, language can capture in itself something of the nature or "instress" of what it is describing, and the fulfilment of the natural laws of beauty is one way in which language can gain access to the "Being" of its referents. It is therefore deeply significant that one of the aspects of Sprung Rhythm which Hopkins found particularly attractive and noteworthy was its naturalness. He mentions this to Bridges in August 1877,[2] and he does so again to Dixon in October 1878,[3] and in the Preface he wrote for his poems, probably in 1883. In each instance Hopkins draws attention to Sprung Rhythm's naturalness, and evidently finds the great advantages this gives him most satisfactory. However, as later discussion will suggest, Sprung Rhythm's greater attraction was its capacity not only to fulfil the natural laws of beauty more closely than common rhythm, but also to give fuller play to the laws he induced from the chestnut-fan, that is to have greater unlikeness within greater likeness.

The other two emphases are best considered together, since they are aspects of the same phenomenon. Hopkins neatly sums it up in "The Origin of our Moral Ideas": "In art we strive to realise not only unity, permanence of law, likeness, but also, with it, difference, variety,

1. See John Thompson, The Founding of English Meter, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, pp. 9-13, for illuminating comment on this point with regard to metre and rhythm.

2. LRB., p. 46.

3. CRWD., p. 14.

contrast: it is rhyme we like, not echo, and not unison but harmony".[1] Much the same emphasis is found in the Platonic dialogue, where the Professor frequently stresses the unity of his various examples as well as the variety existing within or between each unity.[2] Both rhythm and metre (as Hopkins defines them) are found to have these characteristics, the unity arising from the repetition of a sequence of long and short, or accented and unaccented syllables, in the case of rhythm, and of lines and stanzas with fixed lengths or structures in the case of metre; and the variety from the different syllables of the words making up the rhythmic units - and this would include licences like inversion and counterpoint. To put these ideas into different terms, Hopkins conceived poetic rhythms as necessarily having a term, or terms, repeated according to a fixed law, and this constituted a unifying principle, something present throughout the poem, giving it a rhythmic identity and unity. And of equal necessity, poetic rhythms must have principles of change, a term or terms varied, irregular, not repeated or repeated irregularly. The unifying principle is evident in the principles of change as well, when change is deployed according to certain laws (for example those which have grown up around the use of inversions), although the changes themselves can be introduced in a freely varied way. If rhythms are built upon these principles, then readers are given the pleasure of hearing and feeling change, variety, development within unity, and unity within difference and disagreement. Apart from the obvious point of great contrast between these two principles, it is also

1. JP., p. 83. This passage succintly makes the same point that W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley make in their essay "One Relation of Rhyme to Reason", The Verbal Icon, University of Kentucky, University of Kentucky Press, 1954.

2. ibid., pp. 100-101.

worth noting that they are in tension, the one pulling towards rigidity, and the fossilisation of the movement of the verse, and the other towards disintegration into the relative disorder of prose. We may expect that Hopkins will stress the need to keep the balance between these opposing principles and he does this both early on, with his ideas of "proportion" and the "golden mean", and much later, with an abiding insistence on greater strictness where there is greater variety:

> Only remark, as you say that there is no conceivable licence I shd. not be able to justify, that with all my licences, or rather laws, I am stricter than you and I might say than anybody I know.[1]

> The converse at all events you will agree to and would insist on, that where there is much freedom of motion the laws which limit it should be strict.[2]

These points deserve emphasis, since they govern his thinking in other areas as well,[3] and presented him with an artistic ideal he strived after all his life, that is, to combine the greatest freedom and variety within the strictest law, the very complex within the most powerful unity. There are traces of this idea in the undergraduate essays cited earlier, and he picks it up again in the lecture notes on rhythm referred to earlier: "And in everything the more remote the ratio of the parts to one another or the whole the greater the unity if felt at all, as in the circle and ellipse, for the circle is felt to be more at one and

1. LRB. p. 44, (August, 1877).

2. FL. p. 335, (November, 1883).

3. See LRB. p. 106 and pp. 213-214 for the way it influenced GMH's musical theories.

one thing than the ellipse, yet the ratio of its circumference to its diameter is undiscoverable .... "[1] And in a letter to Dixon a few years later he gives the artistic justification for seeking greater complexity and greater unity:

> In general I take it that other things being alike unity of action is higher the more complex the plot; it is the more difficult to effect and therefore more valuable when effected. We judge so of everything.[2]

A higher unity is more valuable partly because of the more excellent "execution" required on the part of the artist, and partly because of the greater beauty and power in the work, its efficacy in achieving the "one common lesson" or "effect"[3] it was intended to. In very many ways Hopkins sought to fulfil these conditions (something which contributes to the sense of tension or strain in his poetry) and it is particularly the case with Sprung Rhythm, whose principles, as we shall see, are intended to achieve the greatest degree of variety within the strongest unity.

An important matter which is best dealt with at this stage is the problem of scansion. One can follow Hopkins's own later preference and scan for falling rhythms only, as W. H. Gardner does. This however has one disadvantage - it nearly always runs counter to the movement of the rhythm as the sense determines it, as the scansion of these lines illustrates:

1. JP. p. 283.
2. CRWD. p. 113.
3. ibid.

I ¦ wálk, I ¦ líft up, I ¦ líft up ¦ héart, ¦ éyes,
Down ¦ áll that ¦ glóry in the ¦ héavens to ¦ gléan our ¦ Sáviour;[1]

It is, I think, quite a grave disadvantage. The scansion of accentual-syllabic verse, in order to ascertain both the metre and the expressional rhythm, has to observe the sense movement of the verse; any other approach makes nonsense of the sense and rhythm, and the same is true, probably truer, for Sprung Rhythm. The reason is that the metrical units of Sprung Rhythm, as Walter J. Ong has pointed out, are based on the sense-stress used in the language (or what Seymour Chatman, following Dwight Bollinger, calls the phrasal accent[2]):

> Syllables which carry a sense emphasis, particularly if this is very marked, tend to pull surrounding syllables to themselves, forming units with a sense-stress as a core; or a sense-stress by itself may even constitute a unit of this sort.[3]

It follows that the metric units of Sprung Rhythm will be composed of stressed and unstressed syllables in widely varying sequences. The scansion of the lines from "Hurrahing in Harvest" above takes no note either of the sense or the metrical units and hence some of the most vital information is concealed or distorted. Even Hopkins's earlier preference for scanning for rising rhythms only is unsatisfactory for

1. Poems 38, p. 70, (MS B scans " ... Í lift úp heart, éyes," but this is so awkward and difficult to say that I use the more obvious disposition of stresses. cf. N. H. Mackenzie, A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins, London, Thames and Hudson, 1981, p. 90.

2. A Theory of Meter, p. 58.

3. "Hopkins's Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry", Immortal Diamond. New York, Octagon Books, 1979, p. 111.

the same reasons, though it may not be quite as bad. The only defence which could be offered for scanning everything as falling is that Hopkins constructed his verse in such a way that the time interval between each stress is pretty much the same. Thus we might expect a two-syllabled foot to have a pause in it if it were to be equal to a four-syllabled foot without a pause. The issue of isochronism will be considered in due course, but at this point I should say that I can find little evidence for such a practice. To give an illustration from the lines from "Hurrahing in Harvest" above, it would be difficult for example to argue convincingly that "lift up, I" is equal in time to "all that", or that the time we would allocate to "heart" would be the same as for "glory in the". Any attempt to equalise the times between stresses would involve some grotesque deformations in the sense, and is obviously unacceptable - except in those cases where Hopkins has quite deliberately employed isochronism, a matter to be dealt with later. Furthermore, Hopkins's own comments on this scanning system would suggest that he did not write his poems with it in mind; it was an arbitrary system which located satisfactorily the monosyllabic foot so important to Sprung Rhythm, and it was adopted for simplicity's sake: " ... but for simplicity it is much better to recognize, in scanning this new rhythm, only one movement, either the rising (which I choose as being commonest in English verse) or the falling (which is perhaps better in itself), and always keep to that".[1] It is clear from the sentence preceding this that Hopkins was aware of the real movement of the rhythm:

> Bridges in the preface to his last issue says something to the effect that all sorts of feet may follow one

1. CRWD. p. 40.

> another, an anapaest a dactyl for instance (which would make four slack syllables running): so they may, if we look at the real nature of the verse;[1]

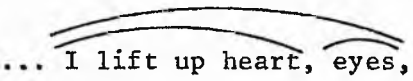
Nevertheless, he chose to scan "conventionally and for simplicity"[2] as rising throughout at first, and then later as falling throughout.[3] In view of this, we may, with other conveniences in mind, adopt a system of scanning based on sense and stress. It enables us to get at "the real nature of the verse", in other words to the movement of the verse in terms of rising, falling, monosyllabic, and various kinds of rocking feet;[4] and it reveals the metric units of the rhythm - a considerable advantage over other scansion systems, as subsequent discussion will indicate. Thus the lines from "Hurrahing in Harvest" would be scanned like this:

> I wálk, | I líft up, | I líft up | héart, | éyes,
> Down áll | that glóry | in the héavens | to gléan | our Sáviour; |

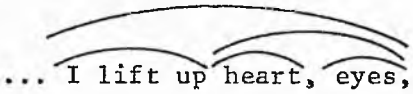
As Hopkins emphasized, one stress goes to a foot in this system, and wherever possible the sense unit is used to determine the unstressed syllables which go with a stress. There are of course different sense units possible, giving slightly different meanings, and these I will note where relevant with broken virgules (:), but on the whole there is likely to be reasonable agreement about the sense units. The one exception to this rule involves the monosyllabic foot: in the example,

1. ibid.
2. ibid. On the question of simplicity see footnote 1 on p. 194.
3. LRB. pp. 156-157, Poems, Preface, p. 45.
4. See pp. 205-207 for discussion of these and Poems, Preface, p. 45.

we are likely to read "I lift up heart, eyes," like this:



and not as the scansion might suggest:



Even the latter is possible, with a certain amount of weight given to "up" (perhaps made more acceptable by the repetition), followed by a pause, thus suggesting the depth to which the speaker has been affected as he looks around him. The first phrasing gives more of a sense of the poet's abandonment to his "gleaning" of his Saviour - the greater rapidity of the rhythm suggesting a breathless exhilaration. However, as a general rule this scansion system does not give as clear an indication of the movement of the rhythm with monosyllabic feet as it does with the other kinds of feet - though it should be said that it is no worse and probably better than other ways of scanning.[1] One way round this problem is the phrasal mark used in the example above, and where it is a help I will include it in the scansion.

In order to give this system greater usefulness and flexibility - and I hope more accuracy - I propose to adopt a numerical notation for

1. If we compare the two scansions of these lines from "Hurrahing in Harvest" it will be seen that in both cases there are four kinds of feet, with the scansion for falling rhythm having the slightly greater simplicity of each foot beginning with a stress. Thus in terms of simplicity there is not much to choose between the two systems, and Hopkins's case for simplicity need not be entirely granted.

indicating the relative degrees of stress or syllabic "prominence"[1] - or rather, to be more accurate, two different notations, one for common rhythm and another for Sprung Rhythm. Most if not all systems for indicating rhythm are arbitrary and these are no exception. For common rhythm I will use the system of four degrees of relative stress proposed by Otto Jespersen,[2] and now fairly well accepted.[3] Following Jespersen I will use 1 for the lightest degree or stress (or smallest degree of prominence) and 4 for the heaviest, with 2 and 3 for indicating the intermediate levels. In this system 2 is always greater than 1, 3 than 2, and 4 than 3; however, each degree of prominence is not the same wherever it occurs - 3 in one foot is not to be taken as equal to 3 in another, for example, though they would have to be taken as equal if the two syllables of a foot were each given 3 (the so-called accentual spondee, on which I will comment shortly). Hence the system does not indicate the degree of difference between syllables of different feet; in the line

```
 1   4    3    4                              3    4
 1   3 |  2    4  |  2    4  |  2    4  | 2    4
The grey | lawns cold | where gold, | where quick|gold lies![4]
```

1. The distinction is Roger Fowler's, "Structural Metrics", Linguistics, No. 27, November 1966, p. 62. It is a particularly useful one for my purposes, since the notation for Sprung Rhythm will distinguish only between degrees of stress in accented syllables.

2. "Notes on Metre", Linguistica, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1933, pp. 253-256.

3. Since the publication of George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith's An Outline of English Structure (Washington, American Council of Learned Societies, 1957) the four relative degrees of stress have gained wide acceptance amongst linguists and literary critics.

4. Poems, 32, p. 66.

the differences in emphasis between the syllables of the second to the fifth feet (following the lower line of notation) or between those of the second and fifth feet if we use the alternative scansion, are not the same, or at least not necessarily the same. Certainly they are most unlikely to be identical in reality, though they may be perceived as such. Thus all the notation indicates is that 4 is greater than 3, or 3 than 2, but it will not say by how much.

This system as it stands has two disadvantages, particularly with regard to Hopkins's rhythms, which are by nature "stressy" and very dependent on the intonations of the speaking voice, even in common rhythm. The first is its inability to indicate absolute stress in a line, that is, the phrasal accents, those one or two accented syllables which carry greater stress than all the others for reasons of sense. To indicate phrasal accents a lower case "a" will be placed over the syllable; where it is bracketed, it is offered more tentatively as an accent which is plausible, but which would not have the general acceptance another might have, or as an alternative to another in the line. Thus in the line from "The Starlight Night" a possible scansion would be

```
                    a
                   (a)          (a)
 1   4    3      4              a                 a    3    4
 1   3  | 2      4    |    2     4    |    2      4  | 2    4
The grey | lawns cold | where gold, | where quick gold lies!
```

Here "quick -" seems to me clearly to have a phrasal accent - perhaps the strongest stress in the line - while in the case of "cold" and "gold" one or both could carry a phrasal accent, although the context of this line might favour an accent on "gold".

The second disadvantage is that the relative degrees of prominence do not indicate as equal those strong stresses (usually 4) juxtaposed

as a result of inversion (say an iamb followed by a trochee) which are felt to be equal in some way, though a machine would show that there are differences. The problem of juxtaposed stresses is a vexed one, especially in the case of the "spondee", and since they are so important to Hopkins's verse as a whole, they deserve particular attention. Some have argued that the accentual spondee does not exist, since one syllable will always have a slightly greater emphasis, and this will be enough to "tilt" the foot in the direction of an iamb or trochee.[1] Seymour Chatman on the other hand argues that although this may be granted, the fact remains that many people have felt and continue to feel that there is some kind of equality between juxtaposed stresses which is important to a line's rhythm and meaning.[2] The two viewpoints can be reconciled, though with concessions from both sides; the problem lies mainly with the importation of the classical spondee into our prosody, which has led us into thinking that juxtaposed stresses are "equal" in a rather simple way. Something that must be conceded at once is that there will be differences between two juxtaposed stresses, even when an attempt is made to make them as equal as possible. However, the important thing is not that there is a difference, but that it is relatively very small. The "tilt" in one direction or another may satisfy the metre, but compared to the usual difference between a stressed and slack syllable the difference between two stressed syllables is so small that we readily accommodate it and "hear" them as equal - although in many cases we could detect the difference in stress if we chose to. If something is perceived as

1. For example, W. K. Wimsatt Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Concept of Meter: an Exercise in Abstraction", PMLA, Vol.74, No. 5, 1959, p. 594.

2. op. cit., pp. 141-147.

equal then in one sense it is, and the problem is to discover what cues in the utterance allow the hearer to make the adjustment towards equality. To this question there are two important answers. The first is that when two stresses fall together, the idea frequently conveyed is that the meanings carried by the stressed words are equally important, and hence we unconsciously adjust what we hear to reinforce this sense of equal importance. And the second is that successive stresses are given a very characteristic stress-pitch juncture: because the vowels and framing consonants of stressed syllables are normally given a full enunciation, juxtaposed stresses require a pause between them as the mouth adjusts itself from one heavily accentuated syllable to another without the bridging effect of a slack syllable, with its reduced vowel and rhythmic ease.[1] This, the characteristic "sprung" effect Hopkins mentioned to Dixon in 1879,[2] is the most important cue: since both syllables are stressed, with full vowels and clearly enunciated consonants, we accept them as equal in this sense, even though there are on occasions obvious differences in stress between the syllables. Thus what is important is not that there is a small but measurable difference between juxtaposed stresses (though that may be important to metric book-keepers) but that they are both strong and nearly equal (and in one sense, are equal). The stress-pitch juncture I have mentioned is a vital clue to

1. Seymour Chatman argues that the difference between the "pyrrhic" and "spondee" is simply a question of degree (pp. 146-147, 183), but there is a manifest difference between the two. It is also a moot point whether the "level" stresses of a pyrrhic foot have the same tendency to be equalised as those of the spondee. In my judgement, in the majority of cases one syllable will have enough prominence for the difference to be felt if we pay enough attention to it, and under the influence of accentual-syllabic metre it may assert itself even more. Nevertheless, the effect of two successive unstressed syllables must be granted, simply because of the contrast with the normal sequence of alternating stressed and slack syllables.

2. CRWD. p. 23.

a rhythmic unit of particular importance, since it brings together not only lexical stress but in most cases phrasal accents as well, giving the utterance a peculiar strength and tension, as the stresses are "yoked by violence together" and held poised against one another.

The importance of this to Hopkins's poetry is clearly considerable, and it would be a great advantage if we had some symbol in our notation to indicate its presence. For this I will use an equals sign placed between the figures indicating the degree of prominence, thus:

```
  1   4    = 4  2      |   1  4 | 2   4 | 1 2     3
The bright | boroughs, | the circle citadels there![1]
```

Because the juxtaposed stresses would normally carry phrasal accents the scansion would include the symbols for these, though it should be added that because the effect depends as much on the fact that the syllables are fully enunciated as on the perceived equality in prominence, it is possible that one of the syllables will not carry a phrasal accent - perhaps have even less prominence than the 4 it would usually be given - and yet still be marked as having the "sprung" effect of juxtaposed stresses; thus we could scan the last example like this:

```
       a
  1   4  =|  4  2
The bright | boroughs,  ...
```

or even like this, although it would be less acceptable:

```
       a
  1   4  =|  3  2
The bright | boroughs, ...
```

1. Poems, 32, p. 66.

As I mentioned in a footnote a little earlier, the notation for Sprung Rhythm will distinguish only the degrees of stress on the stressed syllables (which will normally be the full-vowel syllables in a foot) and ignores the unstressed syllables. Again, a numerical notation is used, 1 for the lowest degree of stress, 2 for the next highest, and 3 for the highest. Unlike the system for common rhythm, this is an "absolute" one in that 3 is not only always stronger than 2, and 2 than 1, but wherever a figure occurs it indicates about the same degree of stress. Clearly it cannot be absolutely precise, but the degree of stress indicated lies within fairly narrow limits. In many cases, alternative degrees of stress are possible and valuable, and these will be indicated where they seem to be required. Before giving an illustration, I should add that I will also use the equals sign to indicate the presence of "sprung" juxtaposed stresses, since these sometimes occur within a foot. In these cases, one of the stressed syllables in a foot will clearly carry the main or phrasal accent,[1] and therefore there are in Sprung Rhythm two kinds of "sprung" feet: the first occurs when the two stresses are in successive feet and meet as it were on equal terms, and the second when stressed syllables come together within a foot; the effect in each case is very different, as the following examples illustrate:

$$\overset{1}{\text{The heart}} \;=\; \overset{2}{\overset{1}{\text{rears}}} \;=\; \overset{1}{\text{wings}} \;=\; \overset{2}{\text{bold}} \;\overset{3}{\text{and bolder}}$$

$$\overset{2}{\text{And hurls for him,}} \;\overset{a}{\overset{3}{\text{O half hurls}}} \;=\; \overset{1}{\;} \;=\; \overset{3}{\text{earth for him}} \;\overset{3}{=}\; \overset{1}{\text{off under}}$$

1. To make things clearer, I will also use the symbol for phrasal accent (a) in these cases.

a
3
2
his feet.| 1

2 2 a a
1 | 1 (=| 1=). 2 = 1 = | 2= 1 | 2 =
... ware | of a world | where: but these | two tell, | each |

a
1 2 2 =
off the other; | of a rack

a a
1 | 3 = 1 | 3 = 1 | 3 | : 3 | 3 |
Where, | selfwrung, | selfstrung, | sheathe - | and: shelterless, || thoughts |

a a a
3 = 2 =|3 = 2 =| 3 | 2
against thoughts |in groans |grind.|

In the first example, the successive stresses of the first line give it great energy and a vigorous, climactic movement, but it would be difficult to argue that the overall strength within each foot or in the line as a whole is significantly greater than it is in the following, or preceding lines. Hopkins has compacted the strength into a fewer number of syllables and this gives exactly the desired impression of great power gathering itself for a sudden release. In the second example, where a number of juxtaposed stresses occur within feet, the overall strength in the lines is increased, and the rhythm becomes very "heavily loaded", to use an

1. Poems, 38, p. 70.

2. Poems, 61, p. 98. It will be noticed that I have not indicated a "sprung" movement between "tell" and "each" and between "where" and "selfwrung". This is because the longer pause demanded by the commas creates what amounts to a slack syllable between the stresses and the "sprung" effect is lost, or at least diminished to the point where it is hardly felt.

expression of Hopkins's:[1] the tempo slows down, the movement becomes measured and heavy, and the strong syllables following one another charge the whole passage with a remarkable power and weight. The very difficulty in articulating these lines clogged with full vowels and strong consonants reflects the agony of mind both of the speaker as he contemplates hell and of those who endure the sufferings of hell. It is interesting that in these lines from "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" there is no instance of a strict "sprung" foot (that is, a single stressed syllable in a foot following or preceding another stress) - except perhaps in the last foot of the poem - and this makes a significant difference to the rhythm and meaning of the whole section.

These illustrations and the earlier discussion of Sprung Rhythm will have provided some indication of the rationale behind the notation adopted for Sprung Rhythm. It is essentially an accentual rhythm, and consequently the stressed syllables are the feature we need to indicate first of all. This is not to say that the unstressed syllables are insignificant - in Hopkins's hands they are far from that - but they are not as important. A more sophisticated system might indicate all the levels of stress, but at the cost of considerable complexity, and in any event no notation could deal adequately with the other important element in this rhythm, that of time, which will be discussed in due course. As it stands, the three degrees of stress on accented syllables satisfactorily indicate the strength and distribution of the strong syllables, the way they are balanced against one another and the slack syllables, and any crescendoes or diminuendoes, which are important on some occasions, as the lines from "Hurrahing in Harvest" revealed.

1. LRB. p. 263.

Earlier it was shown that for Hopkins two general concepts underlie poetic rhythms - a principle (or principles) of change, and a unifying principle. There are disadvantages attached to a discussion of either of these first, but because it is slightly more convenient I will take the former to begin with. To facilitate the discussion however, a prefatory remark or two about the unifying principle is in order. Hopkins put it most succintly when he said that each foot is "assumed to be equally long or strong".[1] The precise nature of the length or strength of the feet can wait till later, and we can note for the present that there is an element of syllabic strength in the feet - that is the stressed and unstressed syllables together make up the strength of the feet - and an element of time, and these may in the end come to the same thing, since Hopkins's phrasing at least allows the possibility that "long" and "strong" refer to the same thing.

In general terms there are four ways in which Sprung Rhythm is varied, as against three in common rhythm.[2] The first of these is that in Sprung Rhythm there can be varying numbers of unstressed syllables attached to a stress (remembering that there is one main stress to each foot) - from none to six in practice,[3] but most commonly one to three.[4] The second is that the distribution of these syllables around the stress can be varied in many ways. Hopkins consequently had two ways of

1. Poems, Preface, p. 48.

2. These are, (a) the variations created by different words enunciating the same (nominal) rhythms; (b) the licences of substitution and reversal, which when repeated create what GMH called "counterpoint rhythm" (Poems, Preface, p. 46) and (c) the addition or dropping of a syllable, usually at the beginning, middle or end of the line.

3. GMH speaks of seven-syllabled feet in the Deutschland (LRB, p. 45) but W. H. Gardner can only find one doubtful one. (Poems, p. 263).

4. See CRWD. p. 39.

constructing the metric units of his rhythm: since each foot is assumed to be equal in length or strength, he could mix feet having very different arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables, thus creating a logaoedic rhythm, or he could use the same foot several times in sequence, and thus play into the tradition of accentual-syllabic rhythm, as he does in stanza 3, line 5, and stanza 4, line 5 of The Wreck of the Deutschland:

> And fléd | with a flíng | of the héart | to the héart | of the Hóst. |
> I stéady | as a wáter | in a wéll, | to a póise, | to a páne, |[1]

1. ibid., p. 52. Space precludes lengthy comment on the views of Elisabeth W. Schneider given in "Sprung Rhythm: A Chapter in the Evolution of Nineteenth-Century Verse", PMLA, Vol. 80, No. 3, June 1965, pp. 237-253, but I should say that while I would grant her arguments that the metrical experimentation in the nineteenth century, particularly the use of the anapaest, and Swinburne's exploitation of this foot, had an influence on Hopkins, most especially in The Wreck of the Deutschland which has a larger proportion of anapaestic feet than any other poem he wrote, I would take issue with her on one major ground, and two or three others that proceed from it: the main objection is that she does not take Hopkins's remarks about equal strength or length very seriously (pp. 246-247) and seems in fact to have misunderstood him; by failing to recognise that the rhythm is a sense-stress rhythm, and that the stress in it is "more of a stress" than it is in common rhythm (CRWD. p. 39), she makes the mistake of treating it as an ordinary accentual-syllabic rhythm with the odd sprung foot. Treated thus, the character of Sprung Rhythm is lost and its preculiar power denigrated - although Professor Schneider does seem to grasp the essential nature of the rhythm in the opening and closing stanzas (pp. 250-252). (In passing it is worth pointing out that the figures she gets for the numbers of the various feet in Sprung Rhythm (p. 250) are based on a scansion for rising feet only, and therefore do little justice to the real nature of the rhythm, and would give a preponderance of anapaestic feet - which probably encouraged her basic misrepresentation of the rhythm). A further point of disagreement with her is her view that Sprung Rhythm is basically a speech rhythm and has speech rhythm for its metre (p. 249), and consequently it is a simple rhythm, with none of the complex interplay between rhythm and metre in common rhythm - and thus also no complexity and subtlety of meaning. This, she says, can only be gained by playing into the accentual-syllabic tradition (p. 253). However, as I hope to show in this and the next chapter Sprung Rhythm is a complex rhythm with a metre separable from the speech rhythm, and it is capable of subtle and complex expression. Professor Schneider obviously felt that the success of Sprung Rhythm needed an explanation, but since she could not explain it by means of her understanding of Sprung Rhythm (fundamentally an irregular counted rhythm), she had to invoke the presence of accentual-syllabic rhythm: " ... the 'new rhythm'

Obviously this gives Hopkins a very wide choice of feet and rhythms and consequently a flexible rhythmic instrument capable of very subtle and expressive effects if it is properly used.

Broadly speaking the feet produced by this second type of variation can be categorized as rising, falling and rocking. The rising feet are the iamb, the anapaest, and the fourth paeon (⏑⏑⏑′); the falling, the trochee, dactyl, and first paeon. It is possible in theory to have three types of rocking feet in Sprung Rhythm, the amphibrach (⏑′⏑), and these, for which there are no names: ⏑⏑′⏑⏑ , and ⏑⏑⏑′⏑⏑⏑. The last never occurs since as I noted earlier seven-syllabled feet probably do not appear in Hopkins's poetry, but the second does arise from time to time, often with very pleasurable effects - perhaps because of the symmetry and balance in the foot:

In his ecstasy! | ... [1]
And the azurous | hung | hills | ... [2]

The second and third paeons might be considered as rocking feet, since they have slack syllables on either side of stressed syllable, but the one is slightly falling in character and the other rising - though it should be added that in practice the movement and "feel" of these feet will depend a great deal on the character of the syllables which occupy

that he called sprung is actually a blend of conventional and sprung rhythm, with the former predominating" (p. 249).

1. Poems, 36, p. 69. In the scansion offered by W. H. Gardner, the final syllable of "ecstasy" counts as a stress, though it would hardly be registered as one in practice given the integrating effect of the sense unit and the relative weakness of the final syllable compared to the stress on "ec-".

2. ibid., 38, p. 70.

the different positions, and two feet ostensibly the same can move rather differently:

Thou hast bound | bones | and veins in me, | fastened | me flesh, |[1]
And the midriff | astrain | with leaning of, | laced | with fire | of stress. |[2]
Warm-laid | grave | of a womb-life | grey; [3]

The rocking foot (here I include the second and third paeons) is a rather special foot, and the special quality I have in mind is particularly true of the amphibrach. This foot seems to be characteristic of Hopkins's poems in Sprung Rhythm. I found eleven in "The Windhover" and sixteen in "Hurrahing in Harvest", together with thirteen other kinds of rocking feet (⏑ ´ ⏑ , ⏑ ⏑ ´ , ⏑ ´ ⏑ ⏑ , ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ´) in the former, and nine in the latter, out of a total of seventy feet in each poem. Clearly they form a significant proportion of the feet in Sprung Rhythm, and they have an interesting part to play. Apart from their characteristic lift and fall (especially in the two symmetrical ones) which gives a rhythm a kind of measured lilt, they are best described as "chameleon" feet. Because they are both rising and falling, they happily merge into a rising or falling rhythm if either should become dominant, or can facilitate a change from one to the other:

I caught | this morning | morning's | minion, | king [4]

1. ibid., 28, stanza 1, p. 51.
2. ibid., stanza 2, p. 52.
3. ibid., stanza 7, p. 53.
4. ibid., 36, p. 69.

This example needs no comment, but in the next the rhythm is more complex:

| réckŏn bŭt, | réck bŭt, | mínd |
Bŭt: thése twŏ; | wáre | ŏf ă wórld | whĕre: bút thĕse || twó tĕll, | éach |
ŏff thĕ óthĕr; | ŏf ă rácк
Whĕre, | sélfwrŭng, | sélfstrŭng, | shéathe - | ănd: shélterlĕss, || thóughts |
ăgáinst thŏughts | ín grŏans | grínd. | [1]

Here "Bŭt thése twŏ", with its rhythmic ambiguity (either on amphibrach or with "mind" forming two trochees), helps the transition from the falling feet preceding it to the more logaoedic rhythm that follows it, while "off the other" and "of a rack / Where" allow the falling rhythms to reassert themselves without a jarring sense of incongruity.

The last foot we must note is the monosyllabic foot, which is nearly always next to another stressed syllable on one side or the other (there is an exception in the lines from "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" above - "each"), and can recur three times in sequence, thus making four stresses follow one another: "Thĕ héart réars wíngs bóld ănd bólděr,".[2] As I have mentioned before, the monosyllabic foot is important to Sprung Rhythm, both for its unusual rhythmic character and its expressive power. As preparation for later discussion I should mention here the tendency for monosyllabic feet to be heavily accentuated and, particularly, to be lengthened. There is an intuitive sense that these feet are equal in some way to multisyllabic feet, and hence they are given more weight to bring them closer in syllabic strength to the latter.

1. Poems, 61, p. 98.
2. ibid., 38, p. 70.

The third principle of change to consider is the different ways in which stress can be distributed amongst all the syllables of a multi-syllabic foot. There are two extremes in this regard: one can either give the syllable carrying the main stress a great deal of emphasis (as the sense and movement of the verse demand) and the unstressed syllable or syllables very little stress, thus creating a strong contrast between the stress and the slack;[1] or one can, as Hopkins says, distribute the stress fairly evenly amongst all the syllables - again as the sense demands.[2] The effect here is to reduce the contrast between stress and slack, and of course to give the verse a very different character and movement; the latter will be smoother and have a more even tempo, while the former will have a broken movement and a long syllable set against one or more hurried ones. This way of varying the stress will come up later, but it is worth noting here two points of some importance. Firstly, Hopkins assumes that the strength of a foot lies not only in the stressed syllable but also in some degree in the slack syllable or syllables, as he explained to Canon Dixon: " ... it will come about that a foot may consist of one syllable only and that syllable has not only the stress of its accent but also the slack which another word wd. throw on one or more additional syllables, though here that may perhaps be latent, as though the slack syllables had been absorbed."[3] The balance or proportion between stressed and slack syllables is important in Sprung Rhythm and needs to be borne in mind when we consider what makes up the strength of a foot. The second point is that although there are two broad choices

1. ibid., p. 256. I am paraphrasing here some of Hopkins's instructions on the way to read The Wreck of the Deutschland.

2. ibid.

3. CRWD., p. 22.

to make in distributing a stress (with further subtleties introduced by gradations between the two), as the sense suggests, in addition the number of syllables in the foot help to determine the movement:

> Only let this be observed in the reading, that, where more than one syllable goes to a beat, then if the beating syllable is of its nature strong, the stress laid on it must be stronger the greater the number of syllables belonging to it, the voice treading and dwelling: but if on the contrary it is by nature light, then the greater the number of syllables belonging to it the less is the stress to be laid on it, the voice passing flyingly over all the syllables of the foot and in some manner distributing among them all the stress of the one beat.[1]

Here too the movement of the verse will be very different in each case; a relatively light stress evenly distributed amongst three or four syllables will make the foot quick and lilting as triple feet often are, while a strong stress evenly distributed amongst the same number of syllables will make the foot slower and more weighty. We might note again the extraordinary variety of rhythms available to Hopkins; even though we have moved out of a strict metrical rule of change into the determination of rhythm by sense. However, since this is a sense-stress rhythm, and Hopkins does draw attention to these different ways of rendering a foot, it is as well to take note of them.

The fourth way of introducing variety into Sprung Rhythm is by means of the "licences" - outrides and rests.[2] Rests present little difficulty, and are probably extensions of a practice already used by

1. Poems, p. 256.

2. Poems, Preface, p. 48.

poets in English to suggest the significance of a phrase or the silent contemplation of what has been said. However, although in Hopkins's use of the device it has this function,[1] its length is not determined simply by the reader's sense of what is required or intended, but by the time base on which the rhythm of the poem is built. We will shortly be considering how important in Hopkins's poetry the time or length of feet is, but it is reasonably clear from the immediate context of the two rests Hopkins uses that the length of the rest is determined by the nearly isochronous feet surrounding the rest. Thus in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" we can scan the first two lines in this way:

Earnest, | earthless, | equal, | attuneable, || vaulty, | voluminous, |
... | stupendous |
Evening | strains | to be time's | vast, || womb-of-all, | home-of-all, |
hearse-of-all | night. | [2]

The measured, incantatory movement of the first six words exerts considerable control over the length of the rest, which, unlike other conventional rests, constitutes a foot decided by time. Apart from suggesting the inward turning of the mind upon the significance of evening, the rest reinforces the overall mood and tone of the seer or prophet caught up in his vision and chanting as he "spells" out what he reads in the drawing in of the dark. Although the principle is the same in the next example, the tone and movement of the verse give the rest a rather different suggestiveness.

1. Only twice - in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (Poems, 61, p. 98) and the "Echoes" (ibid., 59, p. 91).

2. ibid., 61, p. 98.

How to kéep | – is there ány | any, | is there none such, | nowhere | known some, | bow | or brooch | or braid | or brace, | láce, | latch | or catch | or key | to keep |
Back | beauty, | keep it, | beauty, | beauty, | beauty, | ... | from vanishing | away? |[1]

In this case, the feet of the first line have varying lengths, and varying degrees of stress ("ány any"), which give the line a nervous energy and quickness of movement. But if one looks closely at the sense units I have indicated with the virgules one can see not only what W. H. Gardner has noted – the continual return to the "trochaic base"[2] – but also a return to a time base. It is arguable whether the monosyllabic feet are intended to have the same time given to them as do the trochees and iambs – a reader can give them the same time to good effect if he wishes – but the iambs and trochees are close enough in length for us to sense their time base, and when they recur after some variation, they exert a fair degree of control over our reading of the poem. In this example, the rest not only is very strongly controlled by "beauty, beauty, beauty", but if these words are read more and more quietly, the pause effectively suggests the vanishing into nothing of beauty through sound vanishing into silence.

Outrides, as Hopkins emphasized on one or two occasions,[3] provide a means of counterpointing established rhythms with a different and often contrary movement in the verse, and for this reason they are best dealt with in Chapter 9, which deals with counterpoint of several kinds.

1. ibid., 59, p. 91.
2. Gardner, Vol. 2, p. 107.
3. Poems, Preface, p. 48, CRWD., p. 41.

However, one or two remarks are pertinent here. Firstly, because outriding syllables do not count in the nominal scanning,[1] they are an extremely ubiquitous and flexible device; any from one to three syllables can be added (I have found one which arguably has four[2]), and consequently the length of a line can be increased without altering the nominal metric frame, and the movement of individual feet is significantly altered again without affecting the metre. In other words, it is a way of introducing yet more variety and distinctiveness into the rhythms of Sprung Rhythm. As the discussion in Chapter 9 will explain more thoroughly, these qualities are exactly what is needed in order to achieve the "counterpointing" of a rhythm already very free. At the same time, their variety required greater artistic control, and on occasions this seems to be lacking. The other point worth mentioning is the puzzling contradiction in Hopkins's views about the place of outriding feet in common and Sprung Rhythm. Initially he insisted that they could only be used in accentual-syllabic rhythm:

> Outriding feet belong to counterpointed verse, which supposes a well-known and unmistakeable or unforgetable standard rhythm: the Deutschland is not counterpointed; counterpoint is excluded by sprung rhythm.[3]

This was written in August 1877, but not many years later, in December 1880, he mentions the way outrides counterpoint Sprung Rhythm:

1. Poems, Preface, p. 48.
2. "wellbeing of a self-wise". ibid., 48, p. 83. If not four syllables, the time taken to say this phrase would be the same as for four, with the long vowel of "being" being about equal to two short syllables.
3. LRB., p. 45. (21 August 1877)

> However by means of the 'outrides' or looped half-feet you will find in some of my sonnets and elsewhere I secure a strong effect of double rhythm, of a secondary movement in the verse besides the primary and essential one, and this comes to the same thing or serves the same purpose as counterpointing by reverse accents as in Milton.[1]

This change can be satisfactorily explained in terms of Hopkins's developing skill and sensitivity to the rhythm as he used it. For example, it is possible for Sprung Rhythm, though nominally and in practice mixed, to have a dominant movement - say rising - which an outriding foot could break, since the extra-metrical slack syllables follow directly on a stress, and thus give the foot a falling movement:

$$\overset{2}{\text{But ah,}} \mid \overset{1}{\text{but O}} \mid \overset{3}{\text{thou terrible,}} \parallel \overset{3}{\text{why}} \mid = \overset{a\ 3}{\text{wouldst}} \overset{2=}{\text{thou}} \mid \overset{3}{\text{rude on me}} \mid 2$$

In addition, the outride here signals a transition from a rising to a falling time, a change which evocatively conveys the shift in tone from fearful suppliant to a puzzled, half self-pitying, half defiant "wretch".[3] Readers with a sensitive ear may on the whole agree with Hopkins's statements about outrides - though at least one critic has found the contradiction between his early and later views difficult to

1. CRWD., p. 41.

2. Poems, 64, p. 99.

3. W. H. Gardner (Vol. 1, p. 88) gives an example where an outride marks a change from falling to rising time, but if one looks carefully at the rhythm of the lines, the overall movement is rising throughout, with one or two rocking feet, and the outride is really providing a rhythmic break.

accommodate.[1] Development is a satisfactory explanation in this case, but what is most puzzling is that Hopkins's remarks to Bridges on the impossibility of counterpointing Sprung Rhythm with outrides were made after Hopkins had written two poems in "Falling paeonic rhythm, sprung and outriding"[2] - "The Windhover" and "The Caged Skylark". We know that Bridges had received the latter poem before August 5, 1877, since in a letter of that date Hopkins gave his friend some emendations to the poem, and in both the original MS and the letter outrides are clearly marked in.[3] Furthermore, just over a week after the letter of August 21

1. M. D. Hastings, "The Fallacies of Argument concerning G. M. Hopkins", Poetry Review, Vol. 36, No. 1, 1945, p. 67.

2. Poems, pp. 266, 269. In the MSS, the notes were originally written and corrected as follows: "(~~Sprung~~ Falling paeonic rhym [sic], sprung and outriding)", ("The Windhover"), "(falling paeonic rhythm, sprung and ~~paeonic~~ outriding)", ("The Caged Skylark"), which suggests he had one in mind when he wrote out the other.

3. Poems, p. 269, LRB., p. 42. It is possible that Bridges only received the MS of "The Windhover" in July 1878:

> You will learn that I have just called at Bedford Sq. I brought with me a basket of clean linen but did not deliver it. It comes now between these sheets. The Hurrahing Sonnet was the outcome of half an hour of extreme enthusiasm as I walked home alone one day from fishing in the Elwy. I am going to send you a slightly amended copy of the Falcon sonnet. The Curtal Sonnet ["Pied Beauty"] explains itself, for an experiment in metre (that is, in point of form it is an experiment). (LRB., p. 56).

The "basket of clean linen" was apparently a collection of poems, including "The Windhover" (which Hopkins had already decided to alter) and "Hurrahing in Harvest". There is a possibility that the remark about "The Windhover" refers to a MS Bridges already held, but coming as it does amongst explanations which obviously refer to the poems he had just given his friend, this seems unlikely. It would appear then that "The Caged Skylark" and "God's Grandeur" are the poems which alerted Bridges to the anomaly about outrides and led him to question Hopkins. It is interesting (and curious) that "God's Grandeur" is the only poem in common rhythm in which Hopkins attempted outrides (as far as I know) and he soon changed these to elided or hurried syllables; MS A1 (dated 23 Feb 1877) has line 3 as "It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil", whereas A2 (dated March 1877) reads "It gathers to a greatness, ...". The difficulty with this line is that it has twelve syllables and Hopkins had somehow to account for the extra two; as outrides they are clearly

Hopkins composed "Hurrahing in Harvest", which also has outrides in the A MS. The MS of this poem provides one clue which may solve the riddle: at the top is a cryptic note which reads "sprung and outriding rhythm; no counterpoint".[1] It is possible that in the letter of August 21 Hopkins was attempting, rather badly, to explain to Bridges that outriding feet in Sprung Rhythm did not counterpoint the rhythm and were not to be confused with outrides in common rhythm, which were "outrides proper". Even if this is so, Bridges must have been fairly confused, since the letter is quite explicit - "Outriding feet belong to counterpointed verse, ... counterpoint is excluded by sprung rhythm".[2] Any other explanation has to argue that Hopkins was either confused or had forgotten what he had done in "The Windhover" and "The Caged Skylark" and both these theories are even more untenable than the one offered here. But whatever the answer to this riddle it remains true that outrides can counterpoint both common rhythm and Sprung Rhythm, but their counterpointing effect is in most instances more clearly felt in the former since the irregularity of Sprung Rhythm does not always allow an outride to be easily heard or felt.

The discussion so far has revealed that the principles of change Hopkins developed for Sprung Rhythm give it an extraordinary variety and freedom - certainly far greater than is available in accentual-syllabic metre - but as I noted before Hopkins demanded greater strictness where there was greater freedom, and we must now consider the strict laws which underlie Sprung Rhythm, transforming it from a prose rhythm

not very satisfactory, since the line reads with a fairly regular iambic movement and the counterpointing effect is minimal, if felt at all. Read as elided or hurried the extra syllables can be accounted for more logically and the movement required is rhythmically more satisfying.

1. Poems, p. 269.

2. LRB. p. 45.

to a true poetic rhythm, though without losing the forcefulness or the natural rhythmic character of the spoken language - something Hopkins valued a great deal.[1] Some critics have simply ignored what Hopkins had to say about this aspect of his rhythm,[2] but it is vital to take careful note of the poet's pronouncements in this regard since to misunderstand him here is to misunderstand almost entirely the nature and achievement of Sprung Rhythm. A curious and not easily explicable fact about Hopkins's statements on his new rhythm is a point touched on earlier - his insistence throughout his mature period that he was not writing a rhythmically irregular poetry but on the contrary he was stricter than his contemporaries, and indeed most poets: "Only remark, as you say that there is no conceivable licence I shd. not be able to justify, that with all my licences, or rather laws, I am stricter than you and I might say than anybody I know."[3] "So that I may say my apparent licences are counterbalanced, and more, by my strictness".[4] We can I think make due allowances for the fact that Hopkins was defending his rhythm, and to a traditional prosodist, but we need not make them for similar statements to R. W. Dixon (who was a sympathetic if less understanding correspondent and poet) and to Coventry Patmore. To the former he wrote, "Bridges treats it /Sprung Rhythm/ in theory and practice as something informal

1. ibid., p. 46, Poems, Preface, pp. 48-49.

2. For example S. Walliser, op. cit., I. M. van Noppen, op. cit., Paull F. Baum, op. cit., Charles T. Scott, "Towards a Formal Poetics: Metrical Patterning in "The Windhover", Language and Style, Vol. 7, pp. 91-107, and Harold Whitehall, "Sprung Rhythm", Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Symposium. London, Burns and Oates, 1975, pp. 28-54. These last two articles are noteworthy both for the serious misunderstandings of Sprung Rhythm they reveal and their apparent ignorance of what Hopkins himself had to say about his rhythms. Whitehall's view that Sprung Rhythm is dipodic has been refuted by Y. Winters, op. cit., pp. 119-122 and Walter J. Ong, op. cit., pp. 145-147.

3. LRB., p. 44.

4. ibid., p. 45.

and variable without any limit but ear and taste, but this is not how I look at it".[1] Much of the remainder of this letter is given over to explaining "the writing it somehow and the writing it as it should be written",[2] and the overall impression is of an ear deeply sensitive to the nature of the language but working by principles which were felt to be crucial to the rhythm: "But for the εὖ εἶαι of the new rhythm great attention to quantity is necessary".[3] This was in 1880, and three years later he was stoutly maintaining the same criticisms of Bridges, this time to Patmore: " ... I do not know that Bridges shares all my views; he would, I think, treat it as less strict than I should say it ought to be .... As I look at it, it is a simple thing and capable of being drawn up in a few strict rules, stricter, not looser than the common prosody".[4] It is clear that Hopkins felt his rhythm was governed by a strict principle which gave it the order he thought essential to poetic rhythms, and we need to take him seriously.

Walter J. Ong is almost certainly right in arguing that Hopkins came upon the principle of Sprung Rhythm in the language he heard around him, and having discovered it began to find traces of it in a number of poets, including Shakespeare and Milton.[5] However, it should be said that what he heard and first wrote was not Sprung Rhythm proper, as is revealed by his first attempt at a more accentual rhythm, the "Lines for a Picture of St. Dorothea",[6] written between 1866 and 1868.

1. CRWD., p. 39.
2. ibid.
3. ibid., p. 41. The Greek means literally "to be right, well, good".
4. FL. p. 335.
5. op. cit., pp. 94, 99-105, 163-172.
6. Poems, 25, p. 35.

Lines such as these are, as W. H. Gardner says, "indeterminate and unsatisfying":[1]

> But they came from the South
> * * *
> Is it quenched or not
> * * *
> Which is it, star or dew[2]

Hopkins may have been first struck by the peculiar impact of two stressed syllables juxtaposed - as the name he adopted indicates[3] - but he had too acute an ear not to realise that as it stood the "peculiar beat"[4] lacked a great deal. As Gardner says, "something was needed to make up for the loss of regularity - that ease and grace which syllabic metre imparts".[5] His next discovery may have been the principle of equal strength, which he first touches on in the lecture notes he wrote at Manresa House, Roehampton, on rhetoric and rhythm,[6] and developed later in his letters to Dixon. In the lecture notes he first distinguishes "Rough English accentual verse"[7] - nursery rhymes, weather saws, and so on - which uses an accentual beat, but takes little note of the number of syllables in a line and not much more of the number of strong accents,

1. Vol. 2, p. 137.
2. Poems, p. 36. But see passim.
3. CRWD., p. 23.
4. LRB., pp. 24-25.
5. op. cit., p. 137.
6. JP., pp. 267-288, (1873-1874).
7. ibid., p. 277.

so that the number of beats or strong accents to a line can vary from say a nominal two in every half-line to three or four in each half-line.[1] He then mentions a development of this rhythm, based on the principle of equal strengths:

> This beat-rhythm allows of development as much as time-rhythm wherever the ear or mind is true enough to take in the essential principle of it, that beat is measured by stress or strength, not number, so that one strong may be equal not only to two weak but to less or more.[2]

This is followed by a number of examples, mainly from Shakespeare (and it is interesting in view of Shakespeare's largely accentual-syllabic metric frame, that the examples from Shakespeare are better illustrations of the principle). Hopkins may have discovered this principle through the dropping of a slack syllable from accentual-syllabic rhythm in double time, which brings together two stresses, one without its accompanying unstressed syllable. The loss and the surprise engendered by it make the reader "lean" on the single stressed syllable bringing it up in strength to rough equality with the other feet in the line. This is the idea Hopkins uses when he explains the rhythm to Dixon in February 1879:

> What I mean is clearest in an antithesis or parallelism, for there the contrast gives the counterparts equal stress; e.g. 'sanguinary consequences, terrible butchery, frightful slaughter, fell swoop'; if these are taken as alternative expressions, then the total strength of sanguinary

1. ibid.
2. ibid., p. 278.

> is not more than that of terrible or of frightful or of fell and so on of the substantives too.[1]

Here the grammatical and semantic parallelism reveal the principle very clearly, but in the same letter Hopkins examines the issue of equal strength more closely, and this needs some emphasis:

> To go a little deeper, it supposes not only that, speaking in the abstract, any accent is equal to any other (by accent I mean the accent of a word) but further that each accent may be considered to be accompanied by an equal quantity of slack or unaccented utterance, one, two, or more unaccented syllables; so that wherever there is an accent or stress, there is also so much unaccentuation, so to speak, or slack, and this will give a foot or rhythmic unit, viz. a stress with its belonging slack. But now if this is so, since there are plenty of accented monosyllables, and those too, immediately preceded and immediately followed by the accents of other words, it will come about that a foot may consist of one syllable only and that one syllable has not only the stress of its accent but also the slack which another word wd. throw on one or more additional syllables, though here that may perhaps be latent, as though the slack syllables had been absorbed.[2]

There are several points to be made about this important passage. Firstly, the phrase "speaking in the abstract" is a proviso we must take note of; it warns us that equal stress and equal slack are metric assumptions and can, but very often will not exist in practice. Indeed, exactly equal strength between feet probably cannot exist, and what the poet

1. CRWD., p. 22.
2. ibid., p. 22.

relies on is the mind's capacity to accept a rough approximation in equality as equal. As Seymour Chatman says, commenting on the false assumptions of equal length in feet, "Actually the mind is very elastic in interpreting sensory data, which it regularly over- and underestimates to suit its own predispositions".[1] However, at the same time we need to remember that the assumption is not groundless and does reveal the fundamental basis of the rhythm. Secondly, as I noted earlier, the strength of a foot consists not only in the accent or stress, but in the slack syllables attached to it. In addition, the equality between feet consists in an assumed equality between the stresses on the one hand and the slack syllables on the other. This is most important, since Hopkins's use of the word "quantity" suggests (or is moving towards) syllabic quantity, and "length" is a word which comes up more frequently in Hopkins's subsequent discussions of Sprung Rhythm. This I will come to shortly, but it is important at this stage to emphasize the difference between common rhythm and Sprung Rhythm. The metre of common rhythm is fairly easy to grasp, since its components - a fixed number of syllables, in a simple repeated pattern of alternating stress and slack - are so clear and accessible. But the metre of Sprung Rhythm consists in an equality which is extremely difficult to define precisely, since there are so many variables which go to make up the strength of a foot: different stressed syllables have different degrees of emphasis, and the same syllable can be given very different degrees of stress, depending on the speaker and the context. Much the same applies to length in English, which is clearly a factor in rhythm, but is so inconsistent that it cannot be used as a formal element in English metres. However, in spite of the difficulties of saying what strength is or why one group of

1. op. cit. p. 12.

syllables seems to be about equal in strength to another, strength and equality in strength can be heard or felt when, as Hopkins says, the ear "is true enough to take in the essential principle of it". Where many critics have made a mistake is to apply the metrical assumptions, and the whole cast of mind created by the long history of accentual-syllabic meter in English, to Sprung Rhythm and inevitably have made little sense of it, except perhaps that it is an emphatic prose rhythm. But in hearing or reading this rhythm, in order to understand it and appreciate the achievement it represents, it is necessary to make a major mental and rhythmic adjustment. Just as we listen for the pattern and number in accentual-syllabic rhythm, observing and responding to the way the metre and the natural rhythm of the utterance interact with one another and modify the way the lines are said (and of course what they mean), so in Sprung Rhythm we need to listen for the units of stressed and slack syllables formed by the sense, weighing the strength of each unit against the others and the mental correlative or standard they create in our minds (analogous to the abstract conception of metre in accentual-syllabic rhythms), and altering the strength as the metre and the sense demand and allow. The process is exactly parallel to the one we experience in reading common rhythm, with a continuous, delicate adjustment to the verse being made as we listen for, and create, equal strength as far as we can, but conscious all the time of significant and pleasureable disparities between the lines as we read them and the metre we "hear" alongside them. (In passing, it is worth pointing out that if Hopkins's rhythm is accepted as a metric system with certain nominal assumptions about, for example, the strength of feet, one can explain some features of the rhythm which a few critics have found difficult to accept. For example, in this line there are unexpected stresses on some words, and more than the nominal number:

$$\begin{array}{cccccc} 1 & \overset{a}{3} = 1 & \overset{a}{3} = 1 & 3 & : 3 & \\ \text{Where,} & \text{selfwrung,} & \text{selfstrung,} & \text{sheathe -} & \text{and shelterless,} & \\ 3 & = \overset{a}{3} & 2 & = \overset{a}{3} = 2 & \overset{a}{3} & \\ \text{thoughts} & \text{against} & \text{thoughts} & \text{in groans} & \text{grind.} & \end{array}$$ [1]

The meaning Hopkins intended depends a great deal on "against" and "in" carrying main stresses, but the heavily stressed feet after the caesura are important precisely because of their great strength. Hopkins has increased his "strength base" by something analogous to a succession of spondaic substitutions or successive strong, that is, normally stressed syllables in common rhythm[2] in order to suggest the weight of agony with the clashing strong syllables. The same principle can be applied to a series of lightly stressed feet, with opposite effects. The principle of a <u>flexible base</u>, an increase or decrease in the strength of the feet during a poem, is a very important one and we need to be sensitive to these changes and the way they are made.[3] The interaction between the metre and the natural rhythm of the words is an important fundamental kind

1. <u>Poems</u>, 61, p. 98.

2. cf. Milton's "Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death", <u>Paradise Lost</u>, II, line 621.

3. For another illustration of the same principle, compare the closing four lines of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" with the rest of the poem.

of "counterpoint" answerable to the counterpoint or "syncopation" Roger Fowler has analyzed in common rhythm, created by the constant variation, and tug against the metre, of the sense units, syntax and punctuation in the utterance, even in those cases where the pattern of slack and stress exactly fulfils the metre.[1]

In this brief historical outline of the developments which led to Sprung Rhythm I touched on Hopkins's crude first attempt at an accentual rhythm, which revealed a rudimentary grasp of the basic principle of the rhythm, and on the later perception that there were two kinds of accentual rhythm possible in English - a simple relatively undisciplined kind, and a stricter, more complicated one. The notes where this perception is recorded do not indicate how much cognisance Hopkins took of length (as distinct from strength in the sense of vowel articulation or loudness or pitch), but it would appear that from the first he recognized length as a factor in the rhythm, though initially he may have laid slightly greater stress on the idea of strength. Thus we have a brief discussion of syllabic quantity in relation to Sprung Rhythm in the problematic letter of August 1877,[2] and the mention of "quantity" in the letter to Dixon quoted a little earlier, but in the same letter he emphasizes that "one stress makes one foot, no matter how many or few the syllables".[3] However, a little later in the same year comes the first clear identification of strength with time:

1. "'Prose Rhythm' and Metre", Essays on Style and Language (Ed. R. Fowler), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, pp. 82-99.

2. LRB., pp. 44-45.

3. CRWD., p. 23 (February 1879) , cf. " ... it consists in scanning by accents alone, without any account of the number of syllables ...." ibid., p. 14, (October 1878).

> Since the syllables in sprung rhythm are not counted, time or equality in strength is of more importance than in common counted rhythm, and your times or strengths do not seem to me equal enough. [1]

In mid-January 1881 comes another reference to length as a major element in the rhythm: "But for the εὖ εἶαι of the new rhythm great attention to quantity is necessary".[2] In the Author's Preface, written about 1883, Hopkins makes the same connection between time and strength that he had made earlier to Bridges: "In Sprung Rhythm, as in logaoedic rhythm generally, the feet are assumed to be equally long or strong and their seeming inequality made up by pause or stressing".[3] And finally, the most important evidence of Hopkins's developing concern with time, in both Sprung and common rhythm, a number of the late poems have "hurried feet", "slurs" (which tie "two syllables into the time of one"[4]), and "dwells" - ◠ .[5] In fact, as John Robinson has pointed out, at least five if not all seven of the diacritic marks used for "Harry Ploughman" are connected to time.[6] It seems therefore that Hopkins was aware from the first of the importance of time in Sprung Rhythm, but during his early mature period used it in a flexible and approximate way, relying

1. LRB., pp. 81-82. (May 1879).
2. CRWD., p. 41.
3. Poems, pp. 47-48.
4. ibid., p. 293.
5. ibid. See "Harry Ploughman" (ibid.), "Tom's Garland" (ibid. p. 290), "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" (ibid. p. 294), "No worst" (ibid. p. 287), "To R. B." (ibid. p. 297).
6. op. cit., pp. 74-77.

on the mind's willingness to adjust what it hears according to its predispositions; however, from about 1879 on time became increasingly important in his theoretical formulations and practice. This was probably encouraged by his deepening interest in music and composition, and was reflected in his use of hurried feet, slurs and so on. Between 1884 and 1886 he realized some of these developments in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", which is, as he said "most carefully timed in tempo rubato"[1] and is a remarkable achievement in rhythmic terms alone for the way time and strength interplay with one another.

Syllabic length, time and stress in English present great difficulties to the critic, since at one level they are independent of one another, and can fairly easily be identified, but at another they are so closely linked together and their relationships so variable and difficult to define that it is almost impossible to find consistency in one's observations. Nevertheless, with the help of a few definitions and distinctions some light can be thrown on this problematic area. The first distinction which must be made is between the four determinants of stress in English. Seymour Chatman summarises these as pitch, loudness, length and vowel quality (that is, the degree of accentuation given to the sound of the vowel carrying the stress - what Hopkins called "the bringing out of the sound of a syllable, especially of its vowel sound"[2]).[3] Chatman quotes evidence to suggest that of these four, pitch change is the most important in determining stress, followed probably by length, then loudness.[4] Vowel accentuation is something of an unknown quantity

1. LRB., p. 246.
2. JP., p. 271.
3. op. cit., p. 49.
4. ibid., pp. 49-52.

but is clearly important in defining the degree of emphasis, and tone, as in Eliot's superb ironic glance at socialite culture-mongers:

> In the room, the women come and go
> Talking of Michaelangelo.[1]

Interestingly, Hopkins was aware of all the stress determinants given by Chatman, but placed them in a different order. Pitch he called "tonic accent", and vowel accentuation "emphatic accent" or "accent of stress".[2] Of these he said "English is of this kind, the accent of stress strong, that of pitch weak - only they go together for the most part".[3] Added to pitch and emphatic accent is loudness: "It [accent of stress] is also almost necessarily a heightening of the same syllable in loudness".[4] And speaking of length he clearly recognizes its double nature in English - its contribution to both stress and quantity:

> The length so called of syllables in English, by which wind in the ordinary way is short and as rhymed to bind long or sit, got, hat, met, short, sight, goat, hate, meet long, is rather strength than length of syllable. Undoubtedly there is a difference of length and so also when you add consonants - thinkst is longer than thick, lastst than lass etc. but not in the Greek way by ratios of 1:2.[5]

1. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Collected Poems 1909-1935. London, Faber and Faber, 1936, p. 11.
2. JP. p. 269.
3. ibid.
4. ibid., p. 271.
5. ibid., p. 269.

Thus Hopkins incorporates all Chatman's determinants, but places them in a different order in terms of their contribution to the stress on a syllable. It is possible but unlikely that the cues indicating stress have changed since Hopkins's day, and we do best if we assume that his ear did not pick up the importance of pitch in indicating stress - perhaps because the current knowledge of the language did not alert him to that possibility. However, what is particularly important about these definitions of Hopkins's is that they reveal the way he saw stress determination, and suggest what cues for stress we should look for in his poems: these would be mainly vowel, or better, syllable accentuation (it is important to note that Hopkins includes the consonants in his definition of this quality) and length, since the character of these qualities is to a large extent fixed in the language and can be formal elements of rhythm. Pitch and loudness, although important in determining stress are not determined by the intrinsic nature of the language, but on the contrary are very variable and dependent on tone and sense. Thus Hopkins says of pitch for example "it is a great element of beauty in reading".[1] It is not surprising to find that Hopkins's few instructions on the way to read his poems bear this out, and point back to the theory of language discussed earlier: the unique configurations of the sounds of the words and their relation to one another in the rhythm are to be brought out:

> And so throughout let the stress be made to fetch out both the strength of the syllables and the meaning and feeling of the words.[2]

1. ibid., p. 268.
2. Poems, p. 256.

> To be read, both of them, slowly, strongly marking the rhythms and fetching out the syllables.[1]

> ... its performance is not reading with the eye but loud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on.[2]

> Observe, it must be read adagio molto and with great stress.[3]

Thus the focus of attention will be on stress and stress strength, and length, and whilst acknowledging the considerable importance of pitch and loudness in the former two, I will generally not give them much attention because of their variable and informal character in the language.

A second distinction we can make is between syllabic length and time. We have already noted the two ways in which length is operative in English - as a factor in the strength of a syllable, and as a characteristic which can also be independent of the stress and its strength, as in "running" or "spitting". Classical prosody, in assuming that syllables are either long or short and that the long syllables are twice the length of the short, makes it possible to put into each foot the same quantities in a different order, or different quantities adding up to the same total quantity, as a spondee for a dactyl, and still preserve the time base of the verse. However, because the length of English syllables is not in such a simple fixed proportion this kind of time-based verse is not really possible in English, though some have

1. ibid., p. 263.
2. LRB., p. 246.
3. ibid., p. 303.

attempted it with a small measure of success. Generally the stresses assert themselves and mask any sense of quantity. However, it is possible to have another kind of time-based rhythm, the so-called isochronous rhythm, in which stresses occur with approximately the same time interval between them. Although some have argued for a strict isochronous rhythm in English poetry, this position has now generally been resigned in favour of a subjective perception of isochronism.[1] This concession makes a great difference to any arguments about poetic rhythms since if we are normally predisposed to adjust our perception of the intervals between stresses so that we hear as equal what is in reality not equal, then it is possible for the poet to manipulate that predisposition and make us hear unequal intervals and syncopated rhythms - something that Hopkins is extremely adept at doing, as subsequent illustrations will reveal. It should I think also be stressed that there is a considerable difference in the way we respond to ordinary speech (which might well involve the unconscious adjustment towards isochronism all the time), and to poetic utterance. In the latter, rhythm is foregrounded, to borrow a term from the Prague critics, and because it calls attention to itself in a way that rhythm in ordinary speech rarely does, we become very sensitive to its movements, and frequently we sense not only equality in the intervals between stresses (which have to be far less approximate in poetry than they are in ordinary speech if we are to perceive them as equal, simply because we are giving them so much more attention) but also and possibly more often, the differences in these intervals, and the way they affect the movement and tone of the lines.

1. Milroy p. 118. See also Chatman, op. cit., pp. 40-43, Schneider, op. cit., pp. 246-247, Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Concept of Meter", op. cit., pp. 588-590.

The arguments advanced so far would suggest that on the whole I would reject isochronism as the metrical basis of English verse; certainly isochronism in itself is not an adequate explanation of English rhythms. The main objection is the subjectivity of the arguments. It is too easy to say that one hears a rhythm as isochronous, therefore it is so. Or, alternatively, it is too easy, because of the elasticity of syllabic length in English, to move a rhythm towards isochronism in reading it. By the same token, it is just as valid to say that one does not hear a rhythm as isochronous if one pays close enough attention to it, or to read a poem in such a way that the rhythm is not isochronous, and yet without distorting the language or sense absurdly - indeed, such a reading is likely to be more effective than one which tries to make the intervals between stresses nearly equal. A matter worth mentioning in this regard is that of tempo. Tempo is a vital factor not only in the tone of any utterance, but in suggesting the dynamics of the emotions involved, and if we look closely at any good poem we will find that many lines have subtle shifts in tempo within them, while in the course of the whole poem we will notice far larger changes in the speed at which the lines need to be read. If we are sensitive to tempo in this delicate way, we will be aware of the changing intervals between stresses; sometimes the intervals will appear to be isochronous, but this will only set off the occasions when they are obviously shifting. In short then, isochronism lacks an objective validation from the language itself; unlike accentual-syllabic metre or music it lacks the empirically observable data such as the number of syllables and position of stresses or a time-base to vindicate our subjective perceptions and provide the rhythm with a concrete enough unifying principle. Nevertheless isochronism, as we shall see, remains a potential in the language which the poet can exploit and play off against unequal intervals between stresses, thus

producing a kind of counterpoint which, at least in Hopkins's case, is an important part of the effect he aims at.

The discussion so far might appear to leave me with some difficulties in explaining Hopkins's statement that the feet in Sprung Rhythm "are assumed to be equally long or strong and their seeming inequality is made up by pause or stressing".[1] The difficulty with this sentence is deciding whether "long" and "strong" mean the same thing or different things, or refer to two aspects of the same thing. One point which can be made at once is that due weight must be given to the word "assumed" - equal length or strength, as noted earlier are metrical assumptions, and although Hopkins's first mention of this idea to Bridges makes clear that the poet must ensure his feet are "equal enough",[2] an unvarying equality would become mechanical and monotonous. But a second and more important point centres around the fact that neither to Bridges nor in the Preface did Hopkins say "times and strengths" or "long and strong". The reason for this can be found in the ambiguous character of syllabic length in English. Because length may or may not add to the strength of a foot, depending on the degree of stress on the syllables and the sense of the line, it has a curious ambivalence in Sprung Rhythm, and Hopkins's phrasing is a tacit admission of this fact: a foot with relatively weak stresses in it may be strengthened by a pause, and a strong stress in a foot can compensate for its being much shorter than the others in a poem. It is interesting to observe the same difficulty being dealt with in a similar way in a letter to Dixon, where, as John Robinson observes,[3] Hopkins begins by distinguishing between strength

1. Poems, Preface, pp. 47-48. See also pp. 33-34.

2. LRB., p. 81. See also pp. 33-34.

3. op. cit., p. 75.

and length and ends by conflating them:

> But for the εὖ εἶαι of the new rhythm great attention to quantity is necessary. And since English quantity is very different from Greek and Latin a sort of prosody ought to be drawn up for it, which would be indeed of wider service than for sprung rhythm only. We must distinguish strength (or gravity) and length. About length there is little difficulty: plainly bidst is longer than bids and bids than bid. But it is not recognized by everybody that bid, with a flat dental, is graver or stronger than bit, with a sharp. The strongest and, other things being alike, the longest syllables are those with the circumflex, like fire. Any syllable ending in ng, though ng is only a single sound, may be made as long as you like by prolonging the nasal. Soo too n may be prolonged after a long vowel or before a consonant, as in soon or and.[1]

Hopkins does not specify how these observations are to be applied in Sprung Rhythm, but considered in the light of his other remarks it would seem that his new rhythm demands the most careful attention to length as a factor in strengthening the syllables of a foot, and as a factor in the overall temporal length of the foot - though again allowing for the elasticity in the length of the syllables. Similarly the strength of syllables identical in length can be different and attention must also be given to the way greater strength in terms of the vowels and consonants involved offsets length in both its senses. Thus the answer

1. CRWD., p. 41. It is interesting to note that the problematic stresses on "against" and "in" in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" have an "n" which can be prolonged in the manner Hopkins suggests here and hence vindicate the unusual rhythm in another way.

to the questions raised by Hopkins's phrase "equally long or strong" is really twofold: length and strength on some occasions are the same, and on others they are quite independent of one another. This leads to a most important observation about the nature of Sprung Rhythm; it consists primarily of two elements - equal strength in the feet, and time. Because length has an ambiguous character in English, time and strength can sometimes be synonymous (in which case the rhythm will be isochronous, or so nearly isochronous that our ears are satisfied that it is so) and at other times separable from one another. This has two vital consequences. Firstly, it means that in Sprung Rhythm time is being controlled, largely through the control of strength. In a sense every rhythm controls time, but in Sprung Rhythm the control is far more precise, subtle and complex, with each stress and slack syllable falling in a time and pattern which is vital to the sense and emotional contours of the verse.[1] The control of time includes isochronism, but is not exclusively isochronous. This characteristic of Sprung Rhythm is a mark of Hopkins's achievement and genius, since it is one of the most important factors in the expressiveness he had at command in his new rhythm - capable on the one hand of the most forceful and powerful utterance, and on the other of the most delicate suggestiveness. And secondly, the presence of time and strength in the rhythm in a rather unique relationship enables Hopkins to play one off against the other in an elaborate counterpoint. This is best explained with an example, and to illustrate this and a number of other points made earlier in this discussion I would like to examine the opening lines of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves".

1. This is one of the factors which makes Sprung Rhythm so difficult to read, since it is not simply a matter of getting the stresses in the right place, the degrees of stress and the movement correct, but also of timing everything, and the problems of balancing all these factors make it a very difficult business.

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, | vaulty, voluminous, ...
stupendous
Evening strains to be time's vast, | womb-of-all, home-of-all,
hearse-of-all night.[1]

The first three words have a virtually identical accentual sequence as well as nearly equal syllabic lengths and these combined establish a fairly strong time-base in the rhythm. In addition, the grammatical and semantic structure, and tone, support the measured movement and timing of the words. Such a sense of regular intervals between stresses, and careful control of the syllables falling between the stressed ones, exerts a great deal of influence on the way we read "attuneable", "voluminous" and "stupendous". In these cases, the initial unstressed syllable will, in terms of time, be part of the time previously taken up entirely by "Earnest" and "earthless". Thus we might scan the opening line like this:

Earnest, | earthless, | equal, | attuneable, | vaulty, | voluminous, | ...
stupendous

At the same time the two slack syllables of "attuneable" and "voluminous", as against the one of "Earnest", "earthly" and "vaulty", will tend to be read a little faster or slurred to maintain the time. The slight changes in enunciating the words caused by the presence of a

1. Poems, 61, p. 97.

time-base in the rhythm (it is close in fact to the musical time signature of $\frac{4}{4}$) add considerably to the nuances of tone and feeling in the line: the extra syllables in the fourth and sixth feet give an impression of a small increase in tempo, which in turn conveys a slight shift towards urgency in the speaker's emotional state and a rise in tension as the evening's over-powering size and presence press in on him. Perhaps even now its prophetic significance is being intuitively and personally grasped, even if it is only inchoate at this state. We can also understand a little more fully what Hopkins has achieved in this line if we look at the relation between the sense and the time units. Bearing in mind that each foot is equal in strength, and reading with an ear listening for, and to some extent creating equal strength, what we hear is an extra-ordinarily complex interplay between time and strength. The first three feet set up a rhythmic base composed of syllabic length, time, strength and stress pattern (trochaic or falling), which together form a very powerful metric "set"; however, "attuneable", "voluminous" and "stupendous" are sense units which pull against the time and length units, and even

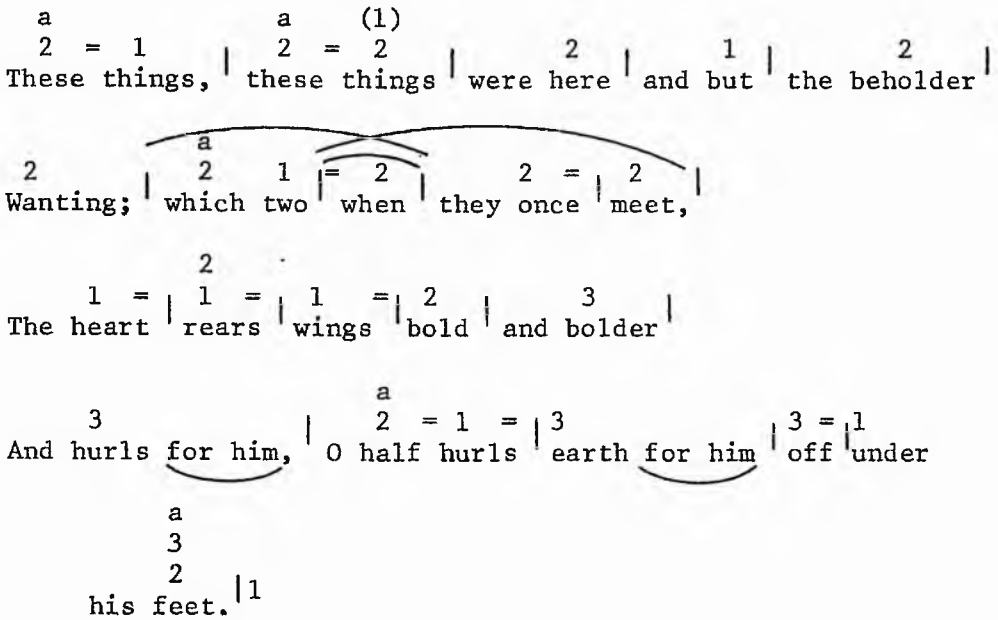
1. Harold Whitehall suggests (op. cit. p. 47) that this sonnet is in 6/4 dipodic time - thus, for example:

```
Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable,  vaulty, voluminous, ...
S    0     L    0  /S  0   0  L  0  0 / S    0   0 L 0  0 / P

     stupendous
       0 L   0

Evening strains to be time's vast  womb-of-all, home-of-all,
S 0  0     L     0  0/ S p    L p / S   0  0     L   0  0

     hearse-of-all night.
   / S    0  0    L
```

(where S=strong stress, L=light stress, 0=no stress, and p=pause juncture). Apart from the considerable difficulties in justifying the light stresses in every case, this argument ignores the length of syllables like "all" in the second line, and the syncopation which these inevitably create, as well as the real time-base of the verse. In this it is a good example of the wilful distortion of a poem in order to satisfy theoretical assumptions of strict isochronism and dipody in English.

in a small way at the falling rhythm with their hint at a rising rhythm in the first two syllables of each of the three words. This creates unique rhythmic tensions in the reader: one element in the rhythm is being maintained, but it is simultaneously being tugged at, and flexed by the presence of a new element, or one that was not salient before, but which has now appeared as a manifestation of both the evening's size and harmony and unearthly nature, and the poet's response as deeper levels of his consciousness are stirred and well up, awe-struck and delighted, but at the same time disturbed, half-fearful.

This example illustrates the necessity for developing an ear which not only hears a rhythmic base of equal strength but is sensitive to the careful use of time in the rhythm. The following lines from "Hurrahing in Harvest" illustrate well the way in which Hopkins can move from a rhythm that is fairly free in terms of time to one evoking a time-base, and then very effectively exploits the time-base he has created:



1. Poems, 38, p. 70.

In the first two lines of this extract, the rhythm is varied quite freely, changing from a falling to a rising movement and back again, and these changes, together with the punctuation and sense of the lines, create the alterations in tempo I noted earlier - small pauses, and a shift from a slower to a faster movement and back - in short the rhythms and time are relatively irregular. However in the third line the juxtaposed stresses, all strong (all the vowels can be considerably accentuated and lengthened), naturally create a nearly isochronous rhythm which defines the increasing tension in the line as the climax is developed. Tightening the movement of the verse in this way fixes rhythmically the gathering of the muscles and strength as the wings spread for flight. But as beautifully executed as this line is, the following line is in a way the tour de force, for having established a time base in a line of only eight syllables, Hopkins expands the number of syllables to fifteen, counting the outrides. The effect of suddenly and powerfully releasing energy in the strong stresses ("hurls" could almost be circumflexed) and of words tumbling into the small spaces allowed by the time base is a rhythm of an over-powering, breathtaking joy and exhilaration - a kind of rhythmic re-creation of the heart's flight and the flood of feelings that breaks in the speaker as a result of his vision. Again, perhaps I should stress that the final line is not isochronous, but the pressure exerted on it from the isochronism of the previous line creates exactly the required sense of compression and suddenly increased tempo.

In some contrast, the following line from "The Windhover" employs rather different methods for achieving its effects:

... | in his ^{2} riding |

Of the rolling | level :underneath him | steady air, |

This line very successfully captures the hawk hovering as it rides the wind to keep itself airborne and stationary, but quite how the "mastery" is conveyed is difficult to say. I would suggest three or even four factors are at work here, and it is their combined influence which makes the line effective. The first of these is the ambiguity of the phrasing: the tendency in reading to group words into sense units is frustrated by the availability of several equally valid ways of organizing the words, and by the interconnectedness of all the possible units. Thus we can have:

Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,
or Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,
or Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,
or Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,

The cause of this ambiguity is partly grammatical. The inversion does not allow us to be sure of the sense groupings since we can read the line up to "steady" as an extended adjectival unit, or take "Of the rolling level" and "underneath him" as two units, as we would if the sentence were not inverted. We really need to convey both these phrasings,

1. Poems, 36, p. 69. The scansion of this line is a little problematic, since "Of the rolling level" is a sense unit, but Hopkins's scansion of an outride on "rolling" and the suppression of the stress on "level" make "Of the rolling" a foot and puts "level" in with "under-". This may appear idiosyncratic and illogical but as I argue later, it does in fact have a purpose. See Poems p. 269 for GMH's directions on how to read an outriding foot, and see also Chapter 9, pp.311-317.

but to do that demands considerable skill in including "underneath him" in "Of the rolling level", yet not so much that the individual integrity of the two units is lost. Our own sense of the control we must exert over the sense units to gain the most vivid effect - balancing one against the other, yet making both one - enables us to experience a correlative of the hawk's control and skill.

The second factor is the way the rhythm is delicately poised between a rising and falling movement. Starting from "in his riding", the line has two very similar third paeons, which in terms of time are made almost equivalent to the rocking foot ⏑/⏑⏑ by the long -ing sound at the end of the foot, followed by another third paeon, but this time the relatively strong stress on "lével" creates a rather different movement, poised between two trochees and the third paeons which preceded it; thereafter a trochee is followed by an anapaest - though here again the slightly stronger stress on the first syllable of "steady" suggests a cretic foot - /⏑/. As with the phrasing, the skill and control needed to suggest the significant movements of each of the feet and yet at the same time to unite the whole line into a rhythmically satisfying unit is such that we are as it were enabled to mimic the hawk's flight in our own way. At the same time however it must be stressed that as in much of Hopkins the rhythm is "imitative"[1] and we need to be aware of the way the rhythm captures in itself the movement of the air and bird and the tension between them. In this regard it is worth pointing out that the odd scansion I mentioned a little earlier in a footnote (p.239) deliberately cuts across the sense units and the normal way we would read the line (with full, or fuller stresses on "level" and "steady") for that very

1. LRB., p. 52.

reason: the movement of the feet, and their syllabic strength, as indicated by Hopkins, are being played off against the normal way the line would be read to suggest the struggle and energy of the bird, and its slight awkwardnesses as it maintains its position. Anyone who has seen a kestrel hovering will recognize its energetic fluttering and tilting in this line.[1]

Lastly, we might note the timing in the line (as distinct from time). This is connected with the point just made, the difficulty of knowing how much relative weight to give to the stressed syllables compared to the weak unstressed and the strong unstressed syllables in "level" and "steady". The suppression of these stresses inevitably involves a shortening of the syllable, and in addition there is the problem of the pauses after the two outrides. Here too some conflict is being set up between the way the scansion suggests the line should be read and the way we would read it if it were prose, for example; the pauses, shortenings and lengthenings of syllables demanded by the scansion generate a powerful sense that the time of each stress relative to the others, and the way the slack syllables fall between the stresses is vital to the meaning of the line. Thus "Of the rolling", with its full o sound, long ng at the end, and subsequent pause because of the outride, is a spacious, long foot, and distances its stress from the next two; in contrast, the suppression of the stress in "level" shortens the syllable and hurries the foot along to the next one, which again has a full stress and a pause after the outride, thus slowing the tempo a fraction and delaying the stress on "air". At the same time, the suppression of the stress in

1. cf. Milroy, p. 126: "The long and flowing lines of the octave of 'The Windhover' are appropriate to the 'behaviour' of the bird: other subjects have other inscapes, and their rhythm is different".

"steady" gives this foot a rapid, strong lifting movement. The sense of critical timing and the difficulty in achieving this amidst the conflicting demands in the line is another important factor in our perception of the bird's movements through the language. It is worth stressing that the vital element in all these factors is the way at several levels, different things are tensed against one another in a taut, poised equilibrium, and in the fullest sense of the word this rhythmic counterpoint imitates the action of the Falcon on the wind.[1]

I would like to end this section on Sprung Rhythm with an observation on "syncopation". I use this term in a sense very close to its musical application, that is, the placing of strong beats in unexpected places, often in an irregular pattern. "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" once again provides a fine illustration of what Hopkins can do with this device:

Earnest, | earthless, | equal, attuneable, || vaulty, voluminous, | ...
stupendous |
Evening | strains | to be time's | vást || womb-of-all, | home-of-all, |
hearse-of-all | night. |

Even though the time base, and in small measure, the falling rhythm, are disturbed in the first line, they are both maintained, even restored somewhat in the first two feet of the second line. But in the remainder of the line the rhythm and time are significantly disturbed; "vast" comes where light syllables had been expected, and the surprise throws a very great stress on the word. Further, if we have felt the principle of

1. It is worth pointing out that the way outrides - even apparently idiosyncratic or arbitrary ones - can influence the way a line is read lends considerable weight to my earlier arguments that the poems ought to be published with their diacritic marks.

equal strength, we will give "time's" and "vast" a full measure of pitch and length and vowel accentuation to make up for the dropped slack syllables, but not so much that the syncopation is not maintained. The combination of great stresses with a stress placed where slack syllables would fall has two important effects: firstly it enables the reader to experience more fully, perhaps one should say more deeply, both time's and night's vast all-engulfing natures, their capacity for drawing everything into the dark and dissolution; and secondly it fixes as one of the most crucial moments in the poem the speaker's profound vision of death, of time's consummation and the judgement - "our night whelms, whelms, and will end us".

After this pivotal moment in the poem the rhythm develops a most unusual movement. In "womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all" the falling rhythm is recovered, and the repetition of three virtually identical phrases retains the measured time-base established in the first line. On the face of it these dactylic feet (as distinct from accentual dactyls) are very like the last three syllables of "attuneable" and "voluminous", but there are important differences: the last syllable ("all") is longer and hence heavier or stronger both by nature and by the sense of the section; the feet are successive; and the sense requires - or at least allows - a slight increase in tempo. These together give the feet a suggestion of triple time - not a light movement, but a weighty, sombre one - overlaying and counterpointing the careful $\frac{4}{4}$ time which gives the rhythm such a grave, inexorable movement and tone. And then this new rhythm is brought up firmly against the monosyllabic foot of "night", where the change, the surprise engendered by it, and the sense of equal strength make us give the word great emphasis and bring out the certain, ominous, overwhelming ingathering of dark. This is prefigured by the syncopation of "time's vast" and developed as a climax in the succeeding

dactylic feet, with their undertones of urgency and deepening anxiety. The poem is, to say the least, a remarkable achievement.

Many of the discussions so far apply in a number of respects to Hopkins's use of common rhythm and in view of this the remarks on common and mixed rhythms will be centred on two main issues which are important to the general arguments I am following. The first of these is Hopkins's extended use of the phrasal accent in common rhythm whereby he moved common rhythm closer to Sprung Rhythm, and the second is his use of time in common rhythm - a development which appeared quite early but only came to be carefully exploited in the late poems.

I have drawn attention already (p.229) to a note that Hopkins attached to a MS of "The Starlight Night" in which he indicated how this poem and "God's Grandeur" were to be read:

> To be read, both of them slowly, strongly marking the rhythms and fetching out the syllables.[1]

It is significant that of the four passages quoted where this one was quoted last time, two refer to poems in Sprung Rhythm and two to poems in common rhythm, and yet there is little difference, if any, between the instructions. The fact that "God's Grandeur" and "The Starlight Night" are both early poems makes this instruction all the more significant. However, in these instances the instruction to read slowly and emphatically may have less to do with creating a rhythm close to Sprung Rhythm than with a strong common rhythm and the sounds of the words, and we need to distinguish between poems of this type, which tend to

1. Poems, p. 263.

follow the traditions of common rhythm, and poems like "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" and "Tom's Garland": on MS A of the latter Hopkins notes "Heavy stresses marked double, thus ″ and stresses of sense, independent of the natural stress of the verse, thus ˝ "[1], and on a MS of the former he wrote "(Common rhythm highly stressed ....)",[2] which as Walter J. Ong observes, indicates "a realization that common rhythm ordinarily is not stressed highly".[3] A reader who did not know what rhythm these two poems were written in could be forgiven for thinking they were in Sprung Rhythm, and this makes an important point: it is possible, by using the phrasal accent and the jerky rhythms of energetic speech, to write verse which has the numbers and pattern of common rhythm, but the feel of Sprung Rhythm. Hopkins had good reasons for developing this kind of rhythm, half-way between the two possible rhythms in English. In the case of "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" it was partly a technical reason, since, in Hopkins's words, "That metre /Alexandrines/ unless much broken, as I do by outrides, is very tedious",[4] and later he expands this observation:

> There is, according to my experience, an insuperable tendency to the Alexandrine, so far, I mean, as this, that there is a break after the 3rd foot, cutting the line into equal halves. .... It has some advantages, but it makes it monotonous; and to vary the division, the phrasing, successfully, and for long, is a most difficult matter.[5]

1. ibid., p. 290.
2. ibid., p. 285.
3. "Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry", op. cit. p. 118.
4. LRB., p. 80.
5. ibid., p. 203.

By using the strong stress and the disrupted rhythms of speech Hopkins is able to avoid the monotony of the Alexandrine in "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" and at the same time give the thought of the poem, which is not notably original, some passion and force. In the case of "Tom's Garland" though, the heavy stressing has a deeper purpose. Here is a poem in common rhythm, with all the associations of the metre, and yet the rhythms of the poem are broken, emphatic and freely varied in tempo. This is a rich rhythmic symbolism, as Geoffrey Hill's perceptive comment reveals:

> In the companion-piece, "Tom's Garland", the dispossessed are thrown out of work and out of stride and the piece is, both discursively and rhythmically ("common rhythm, but with hurried feet") perhaps the harshest, most crabbed of all Hopkins's poems. It is as though the poet is implying that, because the men cannot work, therefore the poem itself cannot.[1]

However, even though it is necessary to make a distinction between these very heavily stressed common rhythm poems and the more conventional ones like "God's Grandeur", it must be said that in many poems Hopkins used a stronger degree of stress than is usual, and this is the characteristic Hopkins touch. How he did it is suggested in a revealing passsage from a letter to Bridges in which he is suggesting improvements to Bridges' London Snow:

> I suppose you scan 'The éye márvelled - márvelled at the dázzling whíteness; the éar héarkened to the stíllness of the sólemn áir': this is well enough when seen, but the following is easier to catch and somewhat better in itself -

1. Hill, pp. 104-105.

'Eye márvelled - márvelled át the dázzling whíteness; ear héarkened to the stíllness ín the sólemn áir'.[1]

The first point to note here is the way the definite article at the beginning of each line is dropped; this means that a relatively weak syllable is removed and a relatively strong one moved to its place. The strength of the line is increased immediately, since it is impossible not to give "Eye" some stress, and as a result the stress on "marvelled" is made marginally greater. Further, the possible confusion of "I" for "Eye" also demands that the word be given more than usual emphasis to distinguish it from "I". Hopkins's liking for the strong syllable in the weak place can be seen in the following examples, one from an early poem and one from a late one:

```
                                    a  (a)
                                    4 = 4
 a          a  3        2          3  4    3
 4          4| 2  4  | 3   4=     | 4  3  | 2  4
Crushed.  Why|do men|then now|not reck|his rod?[2]
```

```
 3     4    1   4    4    4        4     4
 4  =  3   |2   3  | 3 =  4      |  3  =  4     |  1  4
Bones built|in me,|flesh filled,|blood brimmed|the curse.[3]
```

A second point is the way normally weak syllables ("at" and "in") are given a stress. At first these stresses seem awkward and artificial, but John Robinson points out that these odd stresses make no sense as stresses alone, and they have to be read with pauses before or after

1. LRB., p. 122.
2. Poems, 31, p. 66.
3. ibid., 67, p. 101.

them, in the context of a slow, emphatic recitation.[1] Read this way, the stresses are more natural and their enrichment of the meaning justifies their use. As with strong stresses in weak positions, these stressed weak syllables give the line a slower, stronger rhythm, and examples of them can readily be found in Hopkins's work:

> Their ránsom, théir rescue, and first, fást, last friend[2]
>
> Keeps gráce: that keeps all his goings graces;[3]
>
> Her Perseus linger and leave her tó her extremes?-[4]

This kind of rhythmic practice has a most significant effect on the character of the poetry, a quality which Robinson pinpoints in his comments on Hopkins's suggested improvements on London Snow, but does not develop:

> The stress on 'at' and 'in' is made possible by pausing before them, and the pausing contributes to the marvelling and the stillness by stopping speech at the criticial moments.[5]

1. op. cit., pp. 76-77. The whole section is interesting for its arguments for Hopkins's idiosyncratic reading of common rhythms, and against the views of Elisabeth W. Schneider, who thinks they are arbitrary.
2. Poems, 40, p. 71.
3. ibid., 57, p. 90.
4. ibid., 50, p. 85.
5. op. cit., p. 77.

In other words, the rhythm suggests the movement of spontaneous speech, as though the person speaking the words were at that moment caught up in the experience. Thereby the reader is transferred to the moments of the experience and is not as is usual in common rhythm, with its smoothness and considered disposition of stress and slack, presented with an experience filtered and distanced by the process of recollecting and contemplating it, and shaping it carefully for others. The result is that a poetry such as Hopkins writes is a representation of the drama of consciousness; like drama it is directed firmly at someone or something in the dramatic context, and apparently not at its readers, and yet by a nice paradox this centres it on its audience in a way that a premeditated poetry written overtly for its readers cannot match, since it lacks the speech cadences and the oblique insistence on an audience which the former kind of poetry has.

In contrast to a poetry like Hopkins's is that of George Herbert (though I should say at once that Herbert does have the dramatic quality I have just described and the contrast lies elsewhere). Quite often one feels with Herbert that although he is taking one through an experience, the direction and end are predetermined, whereas with Hopkins, because we are in touch with a mind in the process of experiencing, we are not allowed to feel sure of the way the experience will develop. What one gains in the way of immediacy and tension is lost in the subtle, sometimes ironic play of a mind over its experience. What one values particularly about a poet like Herbert is the richness of tone, layer on layer of delicately discriminated meanings, often with a penetrating ironic interplay. A good example is "The Collar". It is worth adding that much of Herbert's wealth of meaning lies in the simultaneous perception of several meanings in the words on the page, and these would be lost in any performance of the poem, whereas with Hopkins we are likely

to find the reverse is true. This points to one of the weaknesses Hopkins is prone to, what Yeats identified as his "slight constant excitement".[1] Concentration on the moment of experience means an unvarying focus of attention, and one is often aware with Hopkins of the excitement of immediate experience without the check and distancing of a cooler, reflective mood. Nevertheless, having made that point, it should at once be stressed that Hopkins is a master of the reflective, considered poem when he wants to be. A good example is "In the Valley of the Elwy",[2] which reveals its type in the opening line:

> I remember a house where all were good
> To me, God knows, deserving no such thing:
> Comforting smell breathed at very entering,
> Fetched fresh, as I suppose, off some sweet wood.

This is a gentler, quieter Hopkins, and it appears periodically throughout his mature period - in "Ribblesdale",[3] "My own heart let me more have pity on",[4] and "To R. B.",[5] for example. It even sometimes appears in poems in Sprung Rhythm - "Spring and Fall"[6] and "Inversnaid"[7] are good examples. These poems reveal that Hopkins had a greater range of tones than Yeats's use of "constant" would suggest - from the lyricism

1. Introduction, Oxford Book of Modern Verse, New York, O.U.P., 1937, p. XI.
2. Poems, 34, p. 67.
3. ibid., 58, p. 90.
4. ibid., 69, p. 102.
5. ibid., 76, p. 108.
6. ibid., 55, p. 88.
7. ibid., 56, p. 89.

of the poems mentioned here to the strength and emphasis of "God's Grandeur" to the crabbed, powerful brokenness of "Tom's Garland". And this in turn underlines the extent of his achievement within a very small corpus of work.

In the discussion on the two main ways in which Hopkins strengthened common rhythm (pages 246 to 248) the question of time came up once again in the pauses before and after an odd stress, such as one on a preposition. Although it is not quite so obvious, time is also involved in articulating the differences between a normally stressed syllable in a strong position when these occur in the same foot. For example in "Why do men then now not reck his rod?" the timing of the stress and "slack" syllables is as important to the rhythm and sense as is the degree of vowel accentuation and the iambic pattern of the verse. Similarly with a line like "Their ránsom, théir rescue, ánd first, fást, last fríend"[1] the stresses on "their" and "and" require the most precise sense of timing in regard to the length of the syllables and the pauses before or after them if the line is not to be clumsy and nonsensical. Thus, consciously or unconsciously, Hopkins introduced time into common rhythm, but as with Sprung Rhythm, he used it in a flexible way during his early mature period and only came to use it overtly and precisely in the late poems. He appears to have used a hurried foot first in "God's Grandeur", as I pointed out in a footnote on page 214[2] but it is only with "Tom's Garland" that hurried feet are used as formal elements in a rhythm which

1. ibid., 40, p. 71.

2. There is also a hurried foot in "In the Valley of the Elwy", line 6: "All over as a bevy of eggs the mothering wing". I should also draw attention to Hopkins's frequent use of Miltonic elisions in common rhythm. There is an example here in this line which usefully illustrates the way the extra elided syllable introduces a triplet lilt into the rhythm.

refers to time as well as to pattern and number of syllables.[1] In "Tom's Garland" the hurried feet are important to the overall sense of abruption and dislocation:

> Tom - garlanded with squat and surly steel
> Tom; then Tom's fallowbootfellow piles pick
> By him and rips out rockfire homeforth - sturdy Dick;
> Tom Heart-at-ease, Tom Navvy: he is all for his meal
> Sure, 's bed now. Low be it: lustily he his low lot (feel
> That ne'er need hunger, Tom; Tom seldom sick,
> Seldomer heartsore; that treads through, prickproof, thick
> Thousands of thorns, thoughts) swings though.[2]

In each case, the hurried feet occur in lines with extra syllables, indicating that the hurried syllables are to take about the time of one or two slack syllables in the rest of the poem. More important though, against the background of a slow and measured recitation, giving full emphasis to the many strong syllables, the hurried feet effectively convey the sudden, careless burst of energy as Dick drops his pick and abruptly heads for home or the pressure and lurch of feeling as Tom pauses to consider his lot. Much the same effect is achieved in the solitary hurried foot of "No worst, there is none", which occurs in line six:

1. Hopkins uses three hurried feet in "To R. B." (See Poems p. 297) but in this poem the rhythm does not have the time-reference that "Tom's Garland" has, and the effects are rather more like those achieved in "No worst, there is none" and "In the Valley of the Elwy".

2. ibid., 70, p. 103.

My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief-
woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing-[1]

Here it seems that the speaker's sense of bearing not only a "world-sorrow" but of being actively subjected to the sufferings that man's nature has made him prey to down the ages causes a sudden leap, as though the pain were too intense and he recoils swiftly to escape, but finds it unavoidable. In perhaps every case hurried feet provide a valuable counterpoint by compressing syllables into a smaller space and varying the pace and movement of the rhythm. In this way changes in tone, in the dynamics of the feelings working through the poem, are suggested, and the range available to the poet is thus increased. In a general context though, the presence of a time-base in common rhythm or, what is more common, the sense that the timing of syllables relative to one another is vital, have the same effect that they have in Sprung Rhythm: a tension is generated between the normal speech rhythm and the timing required by the poetic rhythm, and between the latter and the stressed syllables, whose strength, as we saw earlier, is related to the length given them. Something of the results of this tension can be seen in the following lines, with their reverent but pleading tone, mingled with a sense of just indignation:

Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,

Sir, life upon thy cause. See banks and brakes
Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes

1. ibid., 65, p. 100.

> Them; birds build - but not I build; no, but strain,
> Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
> Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.[1]

Particularly significant here is the way the slightly freer and more colloquial rhythms of the first tercet and the first line of the second tercet tug at the movement established during the octave and betray the rising excitement and urgency in the speaker, a delight mingled with a painful awareness of the silent comment all this new life makes on his own. It is a beautifully contoured rise and fall of feeling, creating a restrained but significant transitional climax. It is however true that the use of time in common rhythm is neither as telling nor as obvious as it is in Sprung Rhythm, probably mainly because it does not need it, but it also does not allow it to develop so strongly because of the restrictions of the metric pattern.

The discussion so far suggests that the use of sprung feet in common rhythm would be made much easier for Hopkins by the presence of more than usually strong stresses and a sense of time or timing in the verse. This is generally the case, but some of the instances where Hopkins has mixed the two rhythmic systems are examples of initial catalexis, and the effect is therefore a development of a practice well-established in English poetry. Nevertheless, it does depend on the perception of equal strength in feet, and it is only felt when the remaining strong syllable in a foot is given greater emphasis than it would be given in normal catalectic rhythm. A good example is provided by "As kingfishers catch fire", which has a sprung foot at the beginning of the sestet:

1. ibid., 74, p. 107. GMH said this sonnet should be "read adagio molto and with great stress". (LRB., p. 303).

:I | say móre: | the just | man justices;[1]

An earlier draft of this line reads "Then I say more",[2] and reveals Hopkins's intentions in changing the line. It also reveals two ways of reading the revised line. It is possible to read it as a conventional catalectic line, with much the same movement and degree of stress as "Then I say more", or one can read it as a sprung first foot, with a heavy accent on "I" making it about equal in strength to "Then I", followed by a short pause and then the next foot; "say more" in fact is probably affected by the sprung opening and will gather extra stress and a longer pause after it to bring out the emphatic nature of the opening. A very similar effect is achieved in this line:

```
        a                                  a          3
        4       1    4   2      3          4          2     4
:Death  | or dis|tance soon  |  consumes  |  them: wind[3]
```

Here too, reading "Death" as a sprung foot gives the word greater prominence than it would otherwise have and thereby draws attention not only to death and death's certain approach, but to the symbolism of the darkness, and to Christ's enduring love. Coming where it does at the beginning of the sestet, it pinpoints an important intensification in the thought and feeling of the poem at its turning point.

The next two examples are rather different:

1. ibid., 57, p. 90. I use in these examples the great colon GMH used for indicating sprung feet.
2. See Poems, p. 281.
3. ibid., 40, p. 71.

2 1 3 | 1 3 = | a 4 | 1 4 | 2 4
Why, it seemed | of course; | : seemed | of right | it should.[1]

My cries héave, = | hérds-long; | húddle | in a máin, | a chíef-[2]

or perhaps,

My críes = | : héave, = | hérds-long; | huddle in à máin, | a chíef-

The first example is relatively straightforward, with a reduced stress on "Why" and an elision with "it" creating a quicker anapaestic movement in the first foot which carries over into the next; at the third foot however, two factors combine to alter the rhythm considerably; the juxtaposition of the stresses forces a pause before "seemed", and the sprung foot requires that the syllable be dwelt on - and perhaps followed by a short pause as well. The pauses, and lengthening of "seemed", slow the forward movement of the line, and make us read the last three feet in a slower, more emphatic way than the first two; the result is that a firmer, more reflective tone emerges, drawing out the sense of natural rightness in the atmosphere, and giving "seemed" a carefully controlled ironic undertone.

The second line presents some difficulties. We need to account for the extra two syllables, and the first scansion given above does so most simply. Since Hopkins did not mark this line the first scansion is to be preferred on this ground as well. With this scansion, there are two ostensible anapaestic substitutions in the first and fourth feet, though the suppressed stress on "cries" gives this foot a climactic

1. ibid., 34, p. 68.

2. ibid., 65, p. 100.

movement, so that we could scan it like this:

```
                a                       3               4           a
 1   3     4   =  |  4      3     |  4    1  |  2  1   3    |  1    4
My cries heave,  | herds-long,     | huddle  | in a main,   | a chief-
```

This means that the line moves to a climax and maintains the pitch of feeling at a high-point throughout this and the next line before the brief relaxation of the line after that - thus:

```
                a                       3               4           a
 1   3     4   =  |  4      3     |  4    1  |  2  1   3    |  1    4
My cries heave,  | herds-long,     | huddle  | in a main,   | a chief-

      a     3                       3       3   a
 3    4   |  2       2  1   4   |  2    4  |  2   4    |  2    4
woe, world-sorrow, on an age-old anvil wince | and sing -

                                                    a
                                 4                  4               a
  1   3     |  1   3     |  2       3 |1  2        3    |  3   4
Then lull,  | then leave | off.  Fury had shrieked | 'No ling-
```

Taken this way the line powerfully conveys the rise and fall of the feeling and the bitter sharpness of the whole experience. Even so, there is a certain logic to the second scansion and Hopkins may well have liked it; "cries" can justifiably be given equal stress with "heave" and "herds" - the rise of feeling allows it, and the cries are given prominence in this and the next line - while the "u" of "huddle" is short, and when this is taken in conjunction with the short succeeding syllables and the sense, a hurried foot can be allowed. Indeed, I suspect that the structure of the phrase is such that it will be hurried naturally, but without the reduced stress on "huddle". Thus a full scansion of this rhythm would be as follows:

```
        a      a       (a)          3                    a
2   4 = | 4  =  | 4      3   |  2   1 2  1  4   |  1   4
My cries | heave, | herds-long; |  huddle in a main, |  a chief-
```

This reading of the line has two other points to commend it. By being more emphatic and broken at the beginning the level of feeling is brought to an intense pitch at once, making the line more plaintive and poignant; and secondly, the hurried syllables not only suggest the huddling of the cries by bunching the syllables, but because of the abrupt change of pace they capture by contrast the muscular effort of "heave" in the first half of the line, and the recoiling haste of the second half. The variation thus suggests the agonized twisting and turning of a consciousness subjected to the most prolonged and intense suffering. It will have been noticed that in this line and the previous example from "In the Valley of the Elwy", a syllable has not been dropped from the line as a signal that a sprung foot is present; in these cases, the line is expanded under the pressure of the thought and feeling, and conveys the force behind these with its greater size and strength.

Hopkins's use of common rhythm suggests that he aimed at achieving in it effects similar to those he gained in Sprung Rhythm; by various means - strong stressing, counterpoint of different kinds, elisions, substitutions and hurried feet - he moved it away from its traditional evenness to the intonations of the speaking voice - often the excited voice, but as we saw he had a tonal range from the quiet and reflective mood of "In the Valley of the Elwy" and "To R. B." to the most urgent and impassioned utterance, or the symbolic convolutions of "Tom's Garland". At the same time however, the emphasis on the speaking voice did not mean a loosening of the metrical foundation; rather he sought to be more precise, to be stricter, and thereby to gain a greater control over his rhythms. The examples discussed revealed the great care Hopkins took

with each detail of a line, and as always happens when language is cast into a highly complex poetic order, the meanings conveyed are both more numerous and more precise, more subtle and more profound. Nevertheless, in spite of these parallels between Hopkins's use of Sprung and common rhythms, his common rhythms reveal a full awareness of the unique kinds of expression possible in them (for example, counterpointing by successive reversed accents[1]) and as a result the poems in common rhythm remain clearly distinguished from those in Sprung Rhythm. But in whatever rhythmic system he chose to write Hopkins showed himself capable of beautiful and powerful rhythmic effects, and he justifies W. H. Gardner's judgement of him as "one of the acknowledged masters of original style - one of the few strikingly successful innovators in poetic language and rhythm".[2]

Hopkins's many scattered remarks on his rhythms, although sometimes opaque or incomplete, reveal, on close inspection, that he knew very much what he was about, and in the light of the arguments put forward in this chapter it is interesting to find that he recognised early on the part his rhythms played in determining the character of his poetry: "/my verse/ is oratorical; that is the rhythm is so".[3] By building his poetry around the sense-stress, or what Walter J. Ong, in the valuable article on Sprung Rhythm referred to earlier, aptly calls "the dramatic or interpretive stress",[4] Hopkins necessarily created a dramatic,

1. The use of strong stresses probably made Hopkins acutely aware of counterpoint, although the idiosyncrasy of his readings also led him to misread many lines in Samson Agonistes as irregular or sprung, as Gardner points out (Vol. 2, p. 115).

2. Introduction, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Selected Poetry and Prose, op. cit., p. xiii.

3. LRB., p. 46.

4. op. cit., p. 117.

declamatory poetry. In many of the examples discussed in this chapter I noted the presence of speech-rhythms, especially those of a person caught up in an experience and speaking with a characteristic urgency and passion, and it is the presence of these rhythms which is one of the single most important factors in making Hopkins's poetry "oratorical". It is so dependent on the way it sounds and moves, so fully speech (not merely derived from speech) that it is only itself when it is spoken aloud. I should add at once that saying Hopkins's poetry is speech is not to imply that it is like ordinary speech or that it need sound natural. This does sometimes occur, as in the opening of "Felix Randal", but what we have most often is a language which is pre-eminently speech - because it uses the sense-stress and the rhythms of speech - yet it is subjected to a rigorous artistic ordering which "heightens" the basic materials of the poetry to the point where they are "unlike themselves".[1] The result is a language which is speech, and which frequently uses the rhythms of ordinary speech, but is at the same time so fused with the poetic and rhythmic order created in it that it is unlike ordinary speech, and sometimes seems unnatural. A problem with Hopkins is the not infrequent unnaturalnesses - a stress on a normally unstressed syllable, or a number of very heavily stressed syllables grouped together, for example; these difficulties can often be resolved by a correct reading, and some comments by Ong pinpoint the essential character of Hopkins's rhythms in this regard:

> ... heavy stressing, dramatic interpretation, high feeling are the life of the rhythm itself, so much so that the more dramatic the rendition of a passage becomes, the

1. cf. LRB., p. 89.

> more marked the rhythmic movement is. The converse of this statement is equally true and perhaps more important: the more the heavy stress which constitutes this rhythm is brought out, the more the sense clears and the feeling rises.[1]

A second point which must be made in these concluding remarks concerns the contribution of Hopkins's rhythms to the performance his poems require. We saw on many occasions both how carefully Hopkins constructs his rhythms, holding stress and time and overall foot-strength in tension with one another, and how very difficult it is to do them any justice. Although these poems are speech it is not possible simply to say them as we might speak even a poem in common rhythm: Hopkins's remark to Dixon that to recite "Tom's Garland" and "Harry Ploughman" as they ought to be recited "is not an easy performance"[2] is far more widely applicable and fully justified. These poems are like drama in that they must be performed and yet, like drama as well, the performance required is extraordinarily difficult to achieve; one is always conscious after reading a poem that one's efforts are a poor shadow of what is really needed. In this context it is worth emphasizing again a point made by Michael Black in his article "The Musical Analogy" and referred to in Chapter 4.[3] It is possible to read a Hopkins poem silently, "hearing" a kind of performance mentally, but the success of such an exercise depends a great deal on prior performances aloud; further there is no substitute for actually reading a poem aloud, and for two reasons: first, the act of speaking a poem forces us to take note of the concrete reality

1. op. cit., p. 114. Ong refers here to Sprung Rhythm, but in view of Hopkins's use of the sense stress in common rhythm these remarks have some application to all his poetry.

2. CRWD., p. 153.

3. English, Vol. 25, No. 122, Summer 1976, pp. 111-134. See pp. 120-121.

of the words - the way they actually sound, how they fit together and develop their inter-relations, rhythmic and otherwise - in short the poem is fully realised as it is, and not as we think it is when we read it silently, for in silent reading we are prone not to "hear" various facets of the words and their relations with one another; and second, Michael Black's point,

> We do not know all that it means until we have read it, and until we have said it in such a way that its full expressive force is realised. We then discover quite strange things about the meaning which we had not fore-known.[1]

The discovery of meanings through a first-hand experience of the performance a poem requires is also true if hearing a skilled performance by someone else - one reason why I have included an appendix with comments on recordings by professional actors of some of Hopkins's poems with this thesis; there is much that we can discover from hearing others speak a poem which we cannot discover any other way, although it is also true that the value of hearing someone else recite a poem derives a great deal from our own close examination of the poem, and our own a attempts to recite it as expressively as we can. Thus in two vitally important ways Hopkins's rhythmic practice determined the nature of his poetry, and vindicates in many respects his remarks to Everard Hopkins in 1885 that he was writing a lyric poetry which aimed to develop "the inflections and intonations of the speaking voice" into an art of "fine spoken utterance".[2]

1. ibid., p. 113.

2. TLS., op. cit., column 5.

CHAPTER 8

"Syntactical Magic"[1]

Hopkins's syntax has always presented many difficulties to critics and has provoked both attack (beginning with Bridges' Preface to the First Edition[2]) and energetic defence.[3] Whatever the arguments for and against his syntactical practice, it is utterly characteristic of him - at times conventional and straightforward, more often original, fresh, and brilliant, and with this, sometimes odd, awkward, and strained. This consistency is valuable, since in being typical of him, it is also a very useful pointer to the character of his poetry and to the theories about poetry which lie behind his use of syntax. As much as any other factor, Hopkins's use (and exploitation) of English syntax define and clarify the dramatic nature of his art.

Before beginning the discussion in earnest, it is essential that a working definition of syntax be given, and a few remarks made about the function of syntax in language. The Oxford English Dictionary provides a fairly unsophisticated definition of syntax, but it will serve our purposes: "The arrangement of words (in their appropriate forms) by which their connection and relation in a sentence are shown. Also, the constructional uses of a word or form or a class of words or forms, or those characteristic of a particular author." Language's hold on reality is through meanings, and meaning is primarily created through grammatical structures which, as this definition indicates, connect words in such a way that meaningful relations are formed between them. This is the normal process by which meaning is created and communicated,

1. W. H. Gardner, Poems, p. xxx.
2. See ibid., pp. 241-242.
3. For example, W. H. Gardner, Vol. 1, Chap. 4; Milroy, Chap. 7.

and for most purposes it is reasonably adequate, but the special demands of poetry often mean that the poet has to manipulate ordinary syntax if he is to convey exactly what he means. This can come about for several reasons - for example, the poet has grasped a relation in the world which the syntax of his language cannot express, or he himself has developed a way of perceiving things which necessitates a different linguistic structure. Thus in poetry syntactic deviations become especially important, since they define meaning both by creating new relations in the language and by an implicit contrast with other grammatical structures from which the new ones are derived. In this context it is important to point out that syntax is, or can be, both interpretive and imitative. Thus in the sentence, "The boy kicked his sister", the syntax is imitative in the sense that it suggests the order of events, but it is also, and largely, interpretive, since it has extracted from a total complex in time and space a small part for attention; further the syntax itself can be interpretive in that it stretches out in a successive manner what is actually simultaneous, or excludes from the sentence things happening simultaneously which require another sentence to include them, as in "The boy kicked his sister as she ran away". I mention this because Hopkins frequently and quite consciously makes his syntax imitative of what it denotes, and his syntactic deviations are most often caused by his attempts to capture syntactically what he is describing.

A good enough point at which to start the main discussion is with the differences between our perceptual processes and the nature of language. At any one time we are (usually) perceiving simultaneously a large number of objects, events or sounds or whatever occurring concurrently in our surroundings, although at the same time we tend to have a narrow focus of attention. In some contrast to this, as I noted

above, language (especially spoken language) is essentially linear and its elements are only perceived through time. Thus language would seem to have some difficulties describing accurately an object or scene, but would be better suited to describing anything moving in space or time. Further, since one way in which we perceive is by a perception of one thing after another, language will very effectively convey a succession of images in imitation of our perceptive processes, but will struggle to capture the sudden, complete grasp of something which we sometimes experience.[1] These are all important points to bear in mind, since Hopkins's syntactical practice reveals that he consistently either exploited the effects linguistic structures are capable of, or manipulated them so that they could more effectively express what they are inherently poor at expressing. Thus, to give an example of the way in which Hopkins manipulates syntax:

'S cheek
crimsons; curls
Wag or crossbridle, in a wind lifted, windlaced -
See his wind- lilylocks -laced;[2]

This is a good example of what James Milroy notes as Hopkins's "ability to suggest that mobile substances are somehow captured, 'stalled', caught up in a particular state".[3] The splitting of a compound word with a substantive in the last line here appears clumsy and contrived at first,

1. cf. "... where a glance//Master more may than gaze, gaze out of countenance." Poems. 62, p. 98.

2. ibid., 71, p. 104.

3. op. cit. p. 166.

but the phrase is actually most effective once one has grasped what Hopkins is trying to do: "his" would normally be followed by a noun, or an adjective and a noun, as would have been the case if Hopkins had written "See his windlaced lilylocks" or "See his lilylocks windlaced", but by putting the substantive between the parts of the adjective he turns the entire phrase into a substantive, with the normal grammatical relations between adjective and noun overturned; all the usual connotations of these parts of speech are fused in one image and the movement of a moment caught. Hopkins is most interested not in the way the wind blows through the hair, but in the behaviour of wind and hair as one thing, and his syntax attempts to capture both the unity of what he sees and the way in which he perceives it. A further interesting point about this is the way the past participle "laced" takes on more verbal force by being separated from "wind" and thereby emphasizes the energetic lacing motion of the wind and hair with each other.

This example illustrates well the manner in which Hopkins subverts the linearity of language and compresses into a short, dense phrase a whole complex of predicates. This was a device Hopkins used throughout his mature period, as the following lines from The Wreck of the Deutschland reveal:

> The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
> Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,[1]

His fondness for it is significant, and it provides us with an

1. Poems, 28, p. 62, stanza 34.

opportunity to comment on some vital features of his poetry. As early as 1930, Charles Williams put his finger on two aspects of Hopkins's verse which are important factors in its dramatic character; commenting on line five of the opening stanza of the Deutschland ("Thou has bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,") he wrote:

> It is as if the imagination, seeking for expression, had found both verb and substantive at one rush, had begun almost to say them at once, and had separated them only because the intellect had reduced the original unity into divided but related sound.[1]

And a little later he remarks:

> "Cast by conscience out" is not a phrase, it is a word. So is "spendsavour salt". Each is a thought and spoken all at once; and this is largely (as it seems) the cause and (as it is) the effect of their alliteration. They are like words of which we remember the derivations; they present their unity and their elements at once.[2]

The first quotation puts well the sense Hopkins's poetry give us of being spoken by someone in a hurry to say what he is seeing and feeling; the language is dense and colloquial, the syntax is abrupted and sometimes distorted, all qualities which suggest the spontaneous,

1. Introduction to Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Second Edition), London, O.U.P., 1930, p. xi.

2. ibid. p. xii.

impulsive utterance of a person in the immediate moment of experience. Thus to return to the earlier example from "Harry Ploughman", it is as though Hopkins's eye, seeing the ploughman's hair stirred by the wind, first caught at the movement of the curls, then at the cause ("in a wind lifted, windlaced-"), and then, as the dash may perhaps suggest, he attempts both to convey the single image of wind and hair he saw and to add a further defining feature - that the hair is like lilies waving and criss-crossing in the wind.[1] The syntax effectively conveys both what Hopkins sees, and the process of his seeing - the way his intensely observant mind interprets and constructs the scene before him; in doing so it brings the reader into intimate contact with an alert, engaged intelligence in the midst of a very full experience, and at the same time with whatever it is the person is experiencing. Another point worth drawing attention to is that as it stands the burden-line not only says that the locks are laced by the wind but imitates their interaction in the structure of the phrase, and thereby underlines the ploughman's powerfully energetic and unself-conscious engagement with nature. Rather like Henry Purcell he unwittingly lays bare "the sakes of him" while intent on something entirely different.

In some contrast to this impression of spontaneous utterance, almost exploding out of the pressure of perception, is the aspect Williams notes in the second quotation from his Introduction: "and this is largely (as it seems) the cause and (as it is) the effect of their alliteration." Behind the impression of the immediacy of speech lies an extremely skilful disposition of sound (and of rhythm too)

1. See Poems. p. 293 for another interpretation of this line. They are best taken together.

which add up in the end to a formal patterning of considerable complexity. At the risk of over-working my example, I will look again at the lines from "Harry Ploughman". There are several formal matters to consider here, and we can begin with assonance and alliteration.[1] First, and most obviously, these two devices provide sound linking in and across lines, and by connecting words having different syntactical functions they help to mould whole lines - sometimes successive lines - into unified perceptions. Frequently, where Hopkins has, for example, verbless sentences or noun phrases apparently unconnected syntactically to other parts, the sound helps to embed them into the structure of the whole sentence. Thus, in the lines we have been looking at, the "w" of "Wag" is picked up by "wind", while the sequence "w-d-l(-t)" ("wind lifted") is repeated twice in the succeeding phrases ("windlaced//See his wind- lilylocks -laced"), and serves to emphasize the action of the wind through the hair. One can go a little further: the "w-d-l" pattern also conceals slightly different syntax in the two phrases. Expanded to full sentences, "in a wind lifted" becomes "[they are] lifted in a wind") while "windlaced" becomes "[they are] laced by a [the?] wind". The prepositional change concealed here suggests a sharpening awareness of the wind's activity (something the compound also suggests), while the sound pattern in the surface structure enriches the meanings of "lifted" and "laced" by a mutual transfer.

1. James Milroy has analysed these features of Hopkins's poetry very well and I am indebted to him for some of the observations here. See The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Chaps. 5-7.

This is fairly complicated, but there is in this line another device which Milroy has defined and analysed,[1] and in conjunction with the patterns already noted, it makes the line extraordinarily complex. Milroy calls this device gradience and it consists of a series of steps in sound, in which the dominant sounds of the first unit are dropped in the second, but for its dominant sound the second unit takes a subsidiary sound of the first, and the process is repeated through three or more steps - in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" it is extended to eight steps.[2] Milroy gives as an example

> The down-dugged/ground-hugged/grey[3]

and comments:

> The first step is unified by alliteration on d; the second abandons this but links itself to the first by vowel and consonant rhyme (in this case so nearly completely that step 2 is an 'echo' of step 1). Finally the third step abandons rhyme and is linked to the second by alliteration on gr[4].

In our example, we have the repeated "w-l" pattern ("wind-lilylocks") but in addition Hopkins picks up the "i" sound of "wind" and repeats it in "lily" (the "y" also repeats it in an unstressed form), while

1. ibid. pp. 148-152.
2. Milroy. pp. 149-150.
3. Poems, 28, p. 60, stanza 26.
4. op. cit. p. 148.

in the third step the vowel-rhyme is abandoned and the "l" sound further emphasised. We can also note what Hopkins called "vowelling-off"[1] in the run of vowels from "i" through the "o" of "-lock" to "a"; and there is also the more distant chiming of the "d" sound throughout the passage in "-bridle" and "wind-", and of the hard "c" in "curls", "crossbridle" and "-locks". Thus, although "wind-lilylocks -laced" severs "windlaced" and disrupts the sense of the word, Hopkins has used a wealth of devices to remake the whole phrase into a new unit which includes the original sense of "windlaced", but it is semantically much richer and more complex.

We have therefore an astonishingly intricate structuring at several levels underlying an apparently spontaneous utterance, and as Milroy has shown, these devices are used in consistent and meaningful ways - so much so in fact that they must be considered not only as part of the artistic ordering or structuring of the poems, but also as formalizing elements, pointing to Hopkins's adoption of a poetic convention which gives the poems a special kind and degree of formality, and demands specialised responses from its readers. It might be argued that in the example from "Harry Ploughman" the degree of syntactic deviation, the brokenness of the rhythms and the excited tone - all things suggesting the informal speech of an eager consciousness - are not sufficiently offset by the formality of an alliterating convention and thus the overall impression remains one of spontaneous speech. There are however some further considerations. Although this poem is not in strictness a sonnet, it is a strict sonnet-derivative, and if anything the burden-lines introduce a greater formality and complexity

1. "...this is given by vowelling, which is either vowelling on (assonance) or vowelling off or changing of vowel down some scale or strain or keeping." JP. p. 284.

into the poem simply by the intricate relations created between the long and short lines and the repeated rhythms. At the same time the burden-lines are reminders of the formal patterns of songs and poems with refrains or echo-lines, repeating, for emphasis and as part of a design, much like labouring songs.[1] The degree of formality Hopkins accorded to the burden-lines can be judged from the following remark:

> I will enclose the sonnet on Harry Ploughman, in which burden-lines (they might be recited by a chorus) are freely used.[2]

This passage is significant in more ways than I have suggested here, since it indicates the extent to which Hopkins had developed the ideas he first put to Everard Hopkins in the letter I have often referred to, and had tried in this poem (and I would add, in "Tom's Garland" and one or two others), to write a lyric poetry suited to formal dramatic performance. One may have doubts about the effectiveness or desirability of this, but it indicates the direction in which Hopkins was moving and it has clearly left its mark on the poetry.[3]

The question remains then of what we are to make of Hopkins's mingling of apparently contradictory elements in his poetry. He has moulded them so thoroughly into his own idiom that they sit together

1. cf. "In 'Harry Ploughman' the man is in stride, his craft requires it; and the poem itself, in its rhythm and 'burden-lines', is the model of a work song." Hill, p. 104.

2. LRB. p. 263. (October 1887).

3. See pp.279-281 for discussion of these ideas.

with little or no sense of incongruity, and yet they are playing discernible roles in the impression the poetry makes on us. In the light of what has been discussed in this and the previous chapter, we can say this: in many of the poems the rhythms and the patterns of the syntax are those of speech (although it should also be said a construction like "wind- lilylocks -laced" makes visual and logical sense without being familiar in speech), and these give the poetry the character - the forms and movement - of speech. Furthermore, the diction also contributes to this quality by being drawn from common speech or from dialects, or by having speech-like abbreviations, as in "wallowing o' the plough" and "'S cheek crimsons". Sometimes Hopkins ties a word strongly to the dramatic context of a poem, as with "them" in these lines:

> .... how it hangs or hurls
> Them - broad in bluff hide his frowning feet lashed!
> raced
> With, along them, cragiron under and cold furls -
> With-a-fountain's shining-shot furls.[1]

This is typical of ordinary conversation, which is very much context-linked, and makes this section even more clearly like speech. In general, it should be noted as well that Hopkins's fondness for the short, simple word also plays a part in giving his verse the nervous energy of spontaneous utterance - a quality which this example also illustrates. At the same time however, Hopkins is subjecting his language to a thorough process of "heightening", using the devices

1. Poems, 71, p. 104.

mentioned here and many more, including of course rhythm and metre (or form), and syntax. These devices introduce into the poetry a whole range of artificial structures of many different kinds,[1] and they transform the language of ordinary speech into something very "unlike itself", and yet it still possesses something of the essential character of speech. In the case of "Harry Ploughman", the collection of noun phrases in the opening lines (suggesting the absorbed perceiving consciousness), phrases like "'S cheek crimsons", "wallowing o' the plough", and "Churlsgrace too", and the commands to "look" and "See" (lines 12 and 16) are all strongly evocative of the dramatic situation because they are so characteristic of excited speech, but at the same time one is conscious that the syntax reflects a precise, analytical registering of what is seen and how it is seen; and yet the latter impressions are skilfully assimilated into the overall effect of dramatised perception of a particular vividly experienced moment. Another point worth mentioning is that because so many of the heightening devices Hopkins uses create structures in sound, the heightened language is a language more not less dependent on being spoken (or heard) for its full impact to be felt. As Hopkins said of "Harry Ploughman", it "is altogether for recital, not for perusal (as by nature verse should be)".[2]

1. I use "artificial" here not in the sense of "added on" or "unnatural" but meaning rather that Hopkins has taken fundamental features of language and organised them into an order or pattern - the artificial form is in fact grown from natural elements in the language.

2. LRB. p. 263.

The discussion thus far has lent greater weight to the arguments I have advanced from time to time that the poems are essentially dramatic and require "emphatic recitation" - a recitation which the remarks above suggest should manage to convey both the tones and rhythms of the speaking voice as well as the complex patterns which are woven into the language and give it so rich a form - but I would like to amplify the remarks on these points by looking into two areas where syntax plays an important role. The first of these is the way Hopkins's syntax manages, like drama, to give the maximum impact to an image, or event, or idea. This is sometimes achieved by shock tactics - placing a word or a phrase in a position where it is least expected, as in the example from "Harry Ploughman" of "wind- lilylocks -laced", or as in these lines:

> Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a rollcall rank
>
> This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
>
> Is immortal diamond.[2]

On other occasions, the phrase itself may be especially vivid because of an unusual structure - for example, "child of Amansstrength"[3] or "very-violet-sweet!"[4]. One of the most common and effective devices though is

1. Poems, 71, p. 104.
2. ibid. 72, p. 106.
3. ibid. 71, p. 104.
4. ibid. 38, p. 70.

syntactical compression, and there are a number of fine examples:

> ... dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon ...
>
> Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, ...[1]
>
> ... wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning matched face,[2]

In all of these examples, several sentences or clauses have been compressed into a few words preceding a noun, and hence they have considerable density of meaning, but at the same time the sense is often very difficult to untangle because of the way each word is successively modified by the previous ones. Nevertheless, this may have been exactly what Hopkins wanted, since the meaning of these compressed constructions, though at first difficult to comprehend, is often suddenly and vividly clear - in Hopkins's own words, it "explodes":

> One of two kinds of clearness one shd. have - either the meaning to be felt without effort as one reads or else, if dark at first reading, when once made out <u>to explode</u>[3]

Clearly Hopkins liked the idea of a meaning having a startling and penetrating impact on the reader, and he did not hesitate in exploiting a syntactical structure to an extreme point in order to achieve this.

Lastly in this context it is important to stress a point made

1. <u>Poems,</u> 36, p. 69.
2. ibid. 59, p. 92.
3. <u>LRB</u>. p. 90.

earlier in regard to "wind- lilylocks -laced", and that is the way the syntax imitates or enacts in its structure part of the meaning the words are trying to convey. This occurs in an example I drew attention to earlier -

> The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
> Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame[1]

and it occurs in one or two other places in "Harry Ploughman", but the most singular example is in "Tom's Garland";

> Low be it; lustily he his low lot (feel
> That ne'er need hunger, Tom; Tom seldom sick,
> Seldomer heartsore; that treads through, prickproof,
> thick
> Thousands of thorns, thoughts) swings though.[2]

Hopkins's own explanation of these lines is the best comment on them and most clearly reveals his purpose in using this extraordinary syntax:

> And so to supper and bed. Here comes a violent but effective hyperbaton or suspension, in which the action of the mind mimics that of the labourer - surveys his lot, low but free from care; then by a sudden strong act throws it over the shoulder or tosses it away as a light matter.[3]

1. Poems, 28, p. 62, stanza 34.
2. ibid. 70, p. 103.
3. LRB. p. 273.

By breaking the sentence "lustily he his low lot swings though" in this way Hopkins was quite deliberately creating a structure which would make the reader participate in the thought processes, and the very sensibility of Tom. Hopkins evidently felt the device was effective, and I would be inclined to agree, though with some reservations about the capacity of the mind to grasp the relation between "lustily he is his low lot" and "swings though" when it has simultaneously to absorb the significance of the intervening "suspended" phrases and the meaning of the whole structure. One reason is the way it manages to bring us as close to Tom as possible in one way and yet in another preserves a sense of distance from him, since although the mind mimics the action of Tom's in the structure of the verse, the sentence is in the third person, and as we read we are encouraged both to consider him coolly from the outside and to know him from within - a complexity of perspective which contributes to what success the poem has. Another reason derives from an important remark Hopkins makes about this poem and which is more widely applicable - "Yet, declaimed, the strange constructions would be dramatic and effective".[1] F. R. Leavis observes of this:

> It is not only the constructions that gain, and "dramatic" has a further sense here than perhaps Hopkins intended. His words and phrases are actions as well as sounds, ideas and images, and must, as I have said, be read with the body as well as with the eye: that is the force of his concern to be read aloud.[2]

1. LRB. p. 272.
2. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". op. cit. p. 24.

Leavis is exactly right here. Hopkins's habitual practice is to make his words and the patterns they form into actors, things which enact as well as say what they mean, and when, over and above this, the poetry is an oral poetry, its readers are made to share in the drama, to be, as I noted in Chapters 3 and 4, both the medium through which the poem "declaims itself" and its active interpreters. The particular passage in question from "Tom's Garland" is probably the most difficult thing to read that Hopkins wrote, but for all its difficulty and questionable success, it embodies a fundamental principle which Hopkins defined so clearly in the remark to Bridges quoted above, and vindicated throughout his mature period.

The lines from "Tom's Garland" examined here require consideration from another point of view, since they raise in a particularly compelling form some of the problems of determining what is and is not "dramatic". The insertion of a long parenthesis into what is a relatively short and simple sentence, is dramatic in the sense that it mimics the disjunctive, almost brutal, action of Tom's mind and powerfully suggests the feelings and ideas jostling for supremacy in him, but it is undramatic in being so distant from speech patterns and hence difficult to grasp. Given these considerations, it seems more than likely that a <u>reader</u> of "Tom's Garland" may well feel that the poem's effects demand to be heard in an active, voiced reading, but a <u>listener</u> hearing the poem for the first time - or even being familiar with the poem but not having a text in front of him - may respond by saying that the poem is not very intelligible to him unless he is able both to perceive the very complex and intricately organised effects <u>on the page</u> (mainly the result of the punctuation, especially the brackets, which are primarily logical and visual markers and cannot be

registered very clearly in performance[1]) and be the active performer of the poem himself. In other words, this poem, and one or two others like it, are not dramatic in the conventional and simple sense of being suitable for performance by an actor in front of a passive audience, but requires instead that the audience be the performers of the work, or that the performer be his own audience. Further, it is unlike drama in that some effects can only be grasped in the organisation of the words on the page; some passages in "Harry Ploughman" ("wind- lilylocks -laced", "child of Amansstrength", "With-a-fountain's-shining-shot-furls") are like this, and in more senses than one, these two poems are companion-pieces. This point is less applicable to "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", since these poems, in spite of being stylistically elaborate, have much less extreme syntactic deviations (and hence a more accessible meaning) and the development of their thought (and feeling) is less convoluted. Thus although one can argue (as I do elsewhere[2]) that, because of the subject-matter of "Tom's Garland" and "Harry Ploughman" and their highly artificial structures, they could be given a public performance we would not give the simpler more lyrical poems, at the same time they are insistently "dramatic" in the special sense defined above. Again, "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", and to a lesser extent The Wreck of the Deutschland (which is altogether a

1. There is a nice paradox present here: the more Hopkins attempts to make his poetry dramatic and imitative of the mind's processes (which usually involves the simultaneous - or almost simultaneous - awareness and understanding of a number of objects or ideas), the more undramatic in another sense his verse becomes, since by trying to convey near simultaneity of perception with radical deformations of syntax, the language becomes less and less like speech - and perhaps inevitably will need the kind of punctuation markers and explanations Hopkins was required to give.

2. See Chapters 4, 5 and 10.

singular poem) are different in this regard, since their subject-matter, their simpler, "musical" form[1], and the kind of performance they require, together with the characteristics mentioned above, make them even more suitable for a public performance than the other two experimental sonnets. These distinctions enable two further points to be made: clearly, the same poems are "dramatic" in different senses, and therefore lend themselves to different kinds of performance taking place in different contexts; but having said that, "Tom's Garland" and "Harry Ploughman" very firmly underline the fact that with all Hopkins's mature poetry it is essential to be actively, fully engaged as both audience and performer.

The second important contribution which syntax makes to the character of the poetry is in regard to the tone, especially the tone or attitude Hopkins called "bidding". In two ways, syntax has a fairly obvious part to play: first, as noted earlier, where some element in the poetry makes us conscious that a performance is required or being given, then a sense of having the poem directed to us as a play is, of being "addressed" and engaged with it, also arises, and as we have seen, syntax is an important factor in the dramatic character of these poems; and secondly (a point raised in a different context earlier), phrases like "Harry bends, look" and "See his wind-lilylocks -laced",[2] which urge us to share in seeing Harry, suggests the tone of a man speaking to another, and insofar as they create

1. See Chapter 10 for further discussion of this idea.

2. Poems, 71, p. 104.

a dramatic situation around a poem, and makes us participate in the action, then they enrich the intrinsic dramatic characteristics. The invitation to share need not be as overt as it is in these examples - more often it is oblique, as in the lines from "Tom's Garland" discussed above. There is however a third and more important contribution from syntax, and that is the way it creates its own characteristic "tone" in a poem. Hopkins frequently used similar syntactical structures throughout a poem, and as a result its overall character and semantic mode are dictated to some extent by the syntax. Once again, "Harry Ploughman" and "Tom's Garland" illustrate the point in question. The former poem is imbued with an intense pleasure in the ploughman's activity and celebrates his strength and skill and bodily harmony. The syntax, like the rhythm, is "very heavily loaded"[1] and one of its aims is to capture the muscular effort and recoil, the strength which controls the buck and resistance of the plough driving through the earth:

> Each limb's barrowy brawn, his thew
> That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank -
> Soared ór sánk -,
> Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a rollcall, rank
> And features, in flesh, what deed he each must do -
> His sinew-service where do.[2]

1. LRB. p. 263.

2. Poems, 71, p. 104.

This is felt in the many pauses and abruptions in the syntax; the meaning in the lines encourages us to find in the pattern of pause and forward movement something like the tensing and relaxing of Harry's muscles as he guides the plough. But what is equally important is the way the syntax, even as it shows the speaker intensely considering the individual impression made by the different parts and movements of Harry's body, links them all into a single body, harmonized in shape and motion. The first five lines of the poem are a fine illustration of this:

> Hard as hurdle arms, with a broth of goldish flue
> Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped flank;
> lank
> Rope-over thigh; knee-nave; and barrelled shank -
> Head and foot, shoulder and shank -
> By a grey eye's heed steered well, one crew, fall to;

Here the succession of noun phrases in apposition, often tied together by various forms of rhyme and tending to follow the "adjective-noun" pattern, reflect Hopkins's characteristic vision, which notes the marvellous individuality in form and action of every part, but at the same time is acutely conscious of the unity and harmony of the whole, of the presence of "a pressure, a principle" exerting itself from within, and of Harry's single present purpose, both of which are revealed in the solitary verb ("fall to") for all the noun phrases. Furthermore, "one crew", with most grammatical markers suppressed, is emphasized as being syntactically parallel to the previous noun phrases (and hence the summing-up of them all), even though they are the subject of the sentence and "one crew" is, or could legitimately be construed as, its complement - "... *[are]* one crew, ...". Thus the parallelism reinforces the unity

of the total image, just as the syntactical ordering of the individual images reveals the way the speaker's eye moves down Harry's body. And lastly, the burden-line, also by syntactic parallelism, suggests the striking parts of the body in a brief, summarising phrase, as though the eye took in the whole as it moved swiftly from head to foot to shoulder to shin.

The syntax of "Tom's Garland" is very different, although a superficial reading might convey the impression that it is alike. In "Harry Ploughman" the structure tends to be the one described above, with a collection of phrases linked in various ways - by sound and grammatical function usually - and moving towards a single verb.[1] Thus although there is considerable complexity in the sentence, with many pauses, and multiple relations being formed as they proceed, the sentences are complete. However, in "Tom's Garland" the sentences are incomplete - mainly adjectival or noun phrases, with the verbs suppressed - and the result is that the poem has an abrupted, broken tone; for all the massive strength of Tom, the poem is curiously static, caged; without verbs the sentences are short, constricted, disjuncted, with no outlet for the energy they imply, or if they have verbs the sentences are butted against one another with few or no articles or pronouns or modifiers:

> Commonweal
> Little I reck ho! lacklevel in, if all had bread:
> What! Country is honour enough in all us - lordly head,
> With heaven's lights high hung round, or, mother-ground

1. See for example lines 6 to 9.

That mammocks, mighty foot. But nó way sped,
Nor mind nor mainstrength; gold go garlanded
With, perilous, O nó; nor yet plod safe shod sound;
Undenizened, beyond bound
Of earth's glory, earth's ease, all; no one, nowhere,
In wide the world's weal; rare gold, bold steel, bare
In both; care, but share care -
This, by Despair, bred Hangdog dull; by Rage,
Manwolf, worse; and their packs infest the age.[1]

All these syntactical distortions add considerably to the sense of strain, weight, distorting pressure, and to the overall mood of dissatisfaction and unease; a sombre, troubled tone pervades the whole poem and at points a mingled fear and anger breaks through, captured in the rhythms and syntax:

Undenizened, beyond bound
Of earth's glory, earth's ease, all; no one, nowhere,
In wide the world's weal; rare gold, bold steel, bare
In both; care, but share care-

Clearly all is not well with the Commonweal: the presence of a figure like Tom within it and the undenizened without are placing the whole society under enormous strain, and the syntax vividly reflects this.[2] It is worth emphasizing the strange, sinister force and clarity of the

1. Poems, 70, p. 103.

2. "Tom, in work, may be heedlessly happy but I cannot believe that Hopkins regarded this state as ideal: little recking could so easily become great wrecking." Hill, p. 105. cf. Milroy, pp. 218-219.

last sentence of the poem, which unlike those preceding it is a full one, with all the words in the normal relation to one another:

> ... rare gold, bold steel, bare
> In both; care, but share care -
> This, by Despair, bred Hangdog dull; by Rage,
> Manwolf, worse; and their packs infest the age.

The contrast with "Harry Ploughman" is vivid and telling; although Harry is a rough countryman engaged in a wearying and crude task, Hopkins sees a beauty and honour worthy of celebration; more to the point, there is harmony and purpose in Harry, in his task, whereas in "Tom's Garland" the picture is of disjunction, strain, uncaring, "mammocking" force held in tenuous check.[1] The kind of syntactic structures Hopkins used in his poems is therefore an important

1. One of the most perceptive comments on these two poems (and also the best defence of them I have read) is made by Geoffrey Hill (I quote again from a passage I quoted in Chapter 5): 'The achievement of sprung rhythm is its being "out of stride" if judged by the standards of common (or running) rhythm, while remaining "in stride" if considered as procession, as pointed liturgical chant or as chantey. In "Harry Ploughman" the man is in stride, his craft requires it; and the poem itself, in its rhythm and "burden lines", is the model of a work song. In the companion-piece "Tom's Garland" the dispossessed are thrown out of work and out of stride and the piece is, both discursively and rhythmically ("common rhythm, but with hurried feet") perhaps the harshest, most crabbed, of all Hopkins's poems. It is as though the poet is implying that, because the men cannot work, therefore the poem itself cannot.' op. cit. pp. 104-105.

contributory factor in the character of each one; it generates a mood and a tone which is an essential, distinctive part of the total effect a poem has on us, both in the way its structures convey meaning, and in the way they are emblematic of a poem's vision. Consequently, when we read a poem aloud we share or experience in a particularly compelling and complete way its deeper significations.

We considered at one point in the preceding discussion Hopkins's technique of compressing several phrases, and even a number of sentences, into an extended compound word as a means of getting round the sequential nature of language. This kind of structure is called the pre-modifying or left-branching sentence, since all the modifiers precede the word or phrase they modify and the sentence does not make sense until the whole thing has been read.[1] Hopkins made use of the same pattern in a rather different form (that is, it tends to be a complete sentence rather than a compound), but its purpose is essentially the same and his frequent use of it is a testament to his unique way of perceiving the world. Pre-modifying sentences as Hopkins uses them are designed to achieve the kind of perceptions described at the beginning of this chapter - in particular the unity within what is observed and between observer and observed. The following are some examples from different stages of the mature period,

Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind.[2]

1. See Milroy, pp. 212-213.

2. Poems, 28, p. 55, stanza 13.

... wind
What most I may eye after, be in at the end
I cannot, ... [1]

Are you that liar
And, cast by conscience out, spendsavour salt? [2]

Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a roll-
call rank [3]

... broad in bluff hide his frowning feet lashed! [4]

The structures of these sentences are generally new kinds of structure and rarely the inversion of the conventional poetic syntax Hopkins so strongly deprecated: [5] another Victorian poet might have written, for example, "by conscience cast out" but never "cast by conscience out". In the latter Hopkins has taken what usually comes together ("cast out") and prised them apart in order to insert a phrase that would normally precede "cast" or follow "out". The result is, on the one hand, that the whole clause has a tight unity because of the tug of "cast" and "out" towards each other, and on the other the meaning is subtly altered - the casting out is not so much an action (though it includes that), but, as Milroy observes, [6] a state, instantaneously achieved, and perceived as a

1. ibid., 40, p. 71.
2. ibid., 46, p. 81.
3. ibid., 71, p. 104.
4. ibid.
5. LRB. p. 89.
6. p. 220.

single thing. Much the same thing is done in "finds his, as at a rollcall, rank", and "broad in bluff hide his frowning feet lashed!". There are two important points to be made about the effect of this kind of construction. The first is that it distorts normal syntactic relations so thoroughly that words no longer have their usual grammatical functions. Milroy gives one such case:

> And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day[1]

> The word order suggests at least two kinds of construction that differ from the normal noun phrase. One is the many a day construction, which is of very limited use in English; the other is the transposed predicate adjective construction (as in Lovely the woods ..., No. 34). The effect is to suggest not only that the nightfall was frightful, but that the manner of its falling and 'folding' was frightful. That is to say that the 'adjective' takes on adverbial colouring and seems to refer to the whole event as well as the nightfall.[2]

By inverting in this way, a word has its normal fixed status as a noun or adjective or adverb or whatever made into a multiple one, and it connects in several different ways to many more words in the sentence

1. Poems, 28, p. 56, stanza 15.

2. pp. 221-222. It is interesting to note that W. H. Gardner (Vol. 1, p. 145) sees "rueful" in this example functioning as an adjective and an adverb - and for the same reason, since the structure is the same.

giving it far greater density and complexity. Milroy goes on to list a number of ways in which verbs are nominalized, nouns derived from verbs, and adverbs made into nouns and adjectives as well, in order to capture "motion in stable things" and "solidity in mobile things".[1] In other words, Hopkins manipulates his syntax so as to reveal a world electric with swarming, energetic life or "instress" shaping the material of the world, and so fused with it that the most striking feature of the world is the form and "behaviour" of everything in it.

Several points must be made about the pre-modifying construction. One is that the changes or ambiguities in grammatical function can for the most part be suggested in reading the poem aloud by very careful modulation of tone and rhythm; some normally strong relations between words can be played down, while others, usually weak or new ones created by the syntax, can be made prominent. The following lines provide an illustration of this point:

> Only what word
> Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
> Bars or hell's spell thwarts.[2]

Here "Wisest" can be clearly emphasized as an adjective qualifying "word" by having a short time interval between them and pausing briefly after "Wisest". Or, to convey the suggestions of rather pitiful irony implicit in the relations between "Wisest", "heart" and "breeds", there can be a pause between "word" and "Wisest", and the phrase "Wisest my heart breeds" read as a unit, with a fairly strong stress on "breeds" to

1. Milroy, p. 224.

2. Poems, 66, p. 101.

establish the relation of adverb to verb between the words. Such a reading also means that the tempo is rather slower, but Hopkins would have preferred this anyway since it gives greater prominence to the sounds of the words. Thus it is possible for a recital to expose latent meanings, and give a word like "Wisest" considerable potency as the network of relations embedding it in the sentence are revealed. At times of course a recitation must avoid this kind of effect and fix grammatical function unambiguously,[1] but in an example like the one above the sentence has a fluidity and suppleness rarely found in prose or speech, or even in a great deal of poetry.

The second consideration is more important; the work of W. A. M. Peters[2], James Milroy and William E. Baker[3] has established that Hopkins developed a syntax which was so uniquely his own, so consistently different from both conventional poetic and discursive syntax, that it

1. For example, the verbs "stanches, starches" in "The Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" (1.7) which follow three nouns and may by grammatic parallelism have noun associations. Milroy argues for this view, but I would suggest that recitation would have to make clear that these are only verbs in order to make sense of a very complicated sentence. See Milroy, p. 222.

2. Gerard Manley Hopkins. A Critical Essay Towards the Understanding of his Poetry. London, O.U.P., 1947.

3. Syntax in English Poetry 1870-1930. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1967. "Hopkins, it appears, has a set of distinctive syntactic idiosyncrasies, yet these extra-ordinary structures have certain formal properties in common with poetry written after 1920 ..." (p. 104). cf. with this comment on the poetry of e. e. cummings: "One must consider such poetry as possessing its own unique grammar or as containing a number of simultaneously possible recombinations of its elements," (p.35).

is in effect a new kind of syntactic system. This needs to be qualified since it is also true that Hopkins used conventional syntax throughout his career, but the main point is that Hopkins had an array of syntactic deviations, one or more of which appear in nearly every poem, and which continue to develop, even in the late poems using the so-called "plain style" of the Dublin years. (The illustration above comes from a poem written in this style, and indicates why all of Hopkins's poems are so easily recognisable as his). What Hopkins has created in his verse, in greater or lesser degree, depending on the number of deviations he uses, is a kind of "counterpointed" syntax: at one level we are aware of constructions and relations which are the same as, or very similar to, those used in most speech and prose and poetry, but at another level we are continually aware of different structures, of words having multiple or fluid grammatical functions, and of new relations existing between words not related before. Though the one type of syntax is derived from the other, they are different enough for us to be aware of the inter-play between them, and this is the vital point: the full significance of the deviant syntax can only be understood in the contrast between itself and the shadow of the conventional syntax which it invokes. Thus, to illustrate this briefly, the broken, distorted syntax of "Tom's Garland" only makes complete sense when, over and above what it conveys immediately and locally, it is seen in relation to the smooth, connected and articulate syntax normally used in poetry, prose, and in some speech. As I pointed out when discussing this poem a little earlier Hopkins deliberately invokes the presence of that kind of syntax in the poem's final sentence, and he thus calls attention to the meaning suggested by the syntax of the rest of the poem - to rephrase Geoffrey Hill, because the society is strained and disrupted and people cannot work because the society is no longer working

properly, so the syntax too is strained, abrupted, breaking down, no longer able to function as it used to. (In passing, it is worth pointing out that this kind of "counterpointing" goes a long way towards explaining the feeling of tension and strain in Hopkins's poetry - words and structures are continually being tugged into new forms which force of habit resists quite strongly).

The question of counterpointed syntax is best left for more detailed consideration to the chapter on counterpoint (which follows this one) and I would like to turn now to another point arising from Hopkins's use of the pre-modifying sentence. Like the extended compound word this construction also tends to "explode" with meaning, though in a slightly different way, and the difference is significant. John Mathison has explained this well:

> If we think of a Ciceronian sentence, with many phrases and clauses balanced and held in suspension until the meaning is suddenly revealed by the final key verb, we will have some idea of what Hopkins meant. Cicero did not want to reveal the meaning of the sentence until all qualifications have been made. Both Cicero's orations and Hopkins's poems were designed for oral presentation; the attempt is made in both to keep the auditor in suspense, and then to let the idea hit him with full force, already elaborated and qualified. After the auditor's preliminary period of puzzlement, the idea suddenly "explodes" for him.[1]

1. "The Poetic Theory of G. M. Hopkins". Philological Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 1, January 1947, pp. 30-31. It should be pointed out, as a necessary qualification to Mathison's remark, that Cicero could more easily play around with the structure of his sentences than Hopkins could because Latin is an inflected language. It is interesting therefore to observe the parallel in this regard between Milton and Hopkins, who in their own ways both attempt to treat English as an inflected language. Furthermore, in a late letter

The examples of pre-modifying sentences in Hopkins given on page illustrate the effectiveness of the construction in this regard. These lines from "Harry Ploughman"

> Each limb's barrowy brawn, his thew
> That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank -
> Soared or sank -,
> Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a rollcall,
> rank.[1]

are interesting for the way in which the sense of the whole sentence is withheld even past the verb until "rank" which works back and forth across the lines ravelling them all up into a very complicated image of corded muscle in continual, powerful motion, but superbly controlled and purposeful. At the same time, though, "rank" is marked off from the rest of the line by rhyme and punctuation, and as it were held up for special consideration, emphasising the (military) overtones of discipline and order. A very similar effect is evidently

(1887) Hopkins complains at the inability in English to distinguish between the various grammatic functions words can have in an utterance, and thinks of using marks in his poems in order to do so. (LRB. p. 265) This betrays a certain dissatisfaction with English as he found it, and perhaps a wish that it had remained inflected so that he could use syntax the way he wanted to without introducing the interpretive problems and ambiguities it inevitably did.

1. Poems, p. 104.

being sought in "Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind", which highlights the power and role of the wind in the disaster. In context, the line has a telling significance:

> For the infinite air is unkind,
> And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,
> Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;
> Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow
> Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps. [1]

Since Hopkins disliked eye-rhymes it would appear he wanted "wind" to be pronounced the old way, and the long, thin sound gives an onomatopoeic force to the images.

The effectiveness of this construction is obviously considerable, but rather different from that of compression. With the latter, Hopkins manages to subvert the sequential structure of language by compressing the large number of phrases and sentences into two or three or even five words which are technically one word, but in the extended premodifying sentence he does not so much subvert the language's linearity as those ways of expressing things which make for discrete and understandable units within the sentence. By delaying understanding over an extended sentence until all the parts are present and the meaning is perceived as a whole, Hopkins manages to create a strong sense of cohesion and unity in the image or idea he is conveying, but at the same time (and this is important) the image or idea is far more complex,

1. Poems, p. 55.

vibrant, multi-faceted. If we compare the lines from "Harry Ploughman" discussed above with, for example, "Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame", we can see how the latter is vivid and powerful, but it has a precision, a unity drawing the mind to a fine, clear point, whereas the former is by comparison intricate, resonant, energetically expansive and supple. These observations must be considered in the light of Hopkins's insistence that his poetry was intended for oral delivery, and its language is pre-eminently linear. With the one construction he was trying to limit the dissecting effects of a linear structure and convey unity of form and behaviour in tightly-knit linguistic unity, while with the other he was using the successive nature of language to convey a different kind of perception, often more complex and expansive. In most cases, both kinds of construction achieve a heightened impact and immediacy, but there is a special exception to this, noted earlier with regard to "Tom's Garland". Where the language becomes distorted past a certain point and we have to see the organisation of the words on the page to grasp its meaning, the dramatic effect consists in both a recital (which would manifest the syntactic distortions that aim to subvert or exploit language's linearity) and the perception of a spatial arrangement of language, and consequently the poetry is no longer strictly an oral one, but an unusual fusion of an oral verse with the kind of poetry made possible by writing and printing.

In the previous chapter I pointed out how wide Hopkins's rhythmical range is, and he has a corresponding syntactical range as well. He could move from the relatively simple and conventional syntax of the terrible sonnets to the extraordinary complexities of the three great experimental poems ("Tom's Garland", "Harry Ploughman" and "That Nature

is a Heraclitean Fire") and back again to this: "Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend/With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just."[1] The range is in fact fairly complete, from this:

> Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks
> rise
> Around;[2]

to this:

> But nó way sped,
> Nor mind nor mainstrength; gold go garlanded
> With, perilous, O nó;[3]

In a long poem like the Deutschland this range is useful in relieving monotony by variety, but more important, the range gives Hopkins the ability to project different tones and moods, both within poems, even short ones, and between them, as the kind of comparison I have made above reveals. I have pointed out the quiet mood of "In the Valley of the Elwy" before, but it is worth drawing attention to the way the simple, gracious tone of this poem is due in part to the straightforward, relaxed syntax:

> I remember a house where all were good
> To me, God knows, deserving no such thing:

1. Poems, 74, p. 106.
2. ibid. 38, p. 70.
3. ibid. 70, p. 103.

Comforting smell breathed at very entering,
Fetched fresh, as I suppose, off some sweet wood.[1]

Yet even with these simple constructions Hopkins manages a Shakespearian ambiguity in "God knows",[2] which can refer to one or both of the phrases on either side of it, and "fresh" too has a pleasing double meaning.

There is another approach to Hopkins's syntax, and its variety, which suggests that it has another kind of significance. I have on the whole stressed its linguistic aspects, and drawn attention to the ways in which Hopkins made a syntax intended for performance, or, considering it from the other side, the ways in which a performance can modify or exploit the syntax. Indeed, on some occasions, for example with "perilous" in "Tom's Garland" (the passage in which it occurs is quoted above), which packs a whole sentence into one word, it is articulation alone which can make sense of the syntax by conveying exactly the right tone. In these cases, articulation really is the life of the poem. However, at various points I have touched on a different significance of syntax: for example, on p.287 I described the syntax of the poems as emblematic of each one's vision, and in discussing "Tom's Garland" I argued in effect that the syntax in this poem is like a symptom, or even a kind of symbol, of the malaise afflicting nineteenth and twentieth century civilisation. Much the same role can be attributed to the syntax of "Harry Ploughman", of the terrible sonnets, or of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" as the next chapter

1. ibid. p. 67.

2. See William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, London, Chatto and Windus, 1930, pp. 65-73.

will suggest, since in each case the syntax focuses, intensifies and enacts the meaning of the poem as a whole. This breadth, this capacity to feel his way to the core of the matter, is a remarkable ability and a remarkable achievement which provides us with a window on some issues at the heart of the nineteenth century - and indeed, perhaps at the heart of our century as well. In Chapter 5 I drew attention to this point by referring to an important observation made by Geoffrey Hill (in the article which is a worthy tribute to Hopkins's achievement) that in or through his rhythms the poet laid hold of a central "disjuncture" or "diremption",[1] taking place in nineteenth century Britain:

> The "magical change" in the "Immortality" Ode [the line "O joy that in our embers"[2]] is perhaps the greatest moment in nineteenth century English poetry; but in choosing the term one is suggesting restriction as well as potency. The recognition and the strategy to match the recognition - the cessation of "stride", the moment of disjuncture, the picking up of a fresh "stride" - were of their very nature inimitable; they were of and for, that moment. It could be said, however, that in his choice of themes and methods, Hopkins is attempting a correlative pattern.[3]

Hopkins came, Hill writes, to a "vital perception of the underlying ambiguities in nineteenth century speech rhythms",[4] and in turn these

1. op. cit. p. 92.
2. See CRWD pp. 147-148.
3. Hill, p. 104.
4. ibid. p. 105.

laid bare the fundamental disjunctures of the age - revealed most clearly in a poem like "Tom's Garland", but it is present in various forms from the Deutschland on - in "God's Grandeur", "Duns Scotus's Oxford", "Ribblesdale", "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" and the terrible sonnets. But just as Hopkins "saw" rhythmically[1] so he "saw" syntactically too, and he used his syntax both to lay bare the strain and pressure he sensed around him - in the onrush of industrialisation and the social dislocation which comes in its wake, in the desolation of man as a "bare forked animal"[2] - and to restore, to reconcile, to make new:

> The task of the Catholic poem, at least as practised by Hopkins, could be seen as corresponding to the task of the tall nun who "christens her wild-worst Best" (D., 24). The poet ... must have sensed also how the morphemes of demotic speech, the irreducible "Ay!" of subsistence,[3] could be reconciled both with the mystic disciplines of short prayer with the significance of the Corpus Christi procession (Letters to Bridges, 149) and with the sustained melody of Gregorian chant.[4]

The effort in these two directions is exemplified in the contrast, rhythmic and syntactic, between "Tom's Garland" and "Harry Ploughman", and in view of the discussions in this chapter and the suggestions put

1. ibid. p. 91.
2. ibid. p. 110.
3. FL. p. 114.
4. Hill, p. 104.

forward by Hill, it is significant that these two poems represent a new departure for Hopkins. Both are less conspicuously Catholic and devotional, much more concerned with social function and significance, the inner order and health of society, and with human dignity within society's structures. These concerns are present earlier in poems like "Felix Randal" and "Duns Scotus's Oxford", but their prominence at this stage of his development, in conjunction with the remarkable rhythmic and syntactic achievements of the poems, suggests that Hopkins was beginning to mine a rich seam only briefly explored before, and thereby expanding his poetic range and power. Nevertheless, the two concerns noted above, revealed and achieved most clearly in his syntax and rhythms, are threads which run right through his work, and if these unusual symbols are read, as Leavis suggests, with the body as well as the eye, then what they embody is more deeply known in the mind and heart.

CHAPTER 9

Counterpoint, in Different Keys

In Chapter 7 I touched on various kinds of counterpoint from time to time and indicated how very important it is to the richness of meaning a poem possesses and to the pleasure we have in poetic rhythms. For many years now rhythmic counterpoint (that is, the interplay between metre and the natural rhythm of the words) has been recognized as one of the most vital characteristics of poetic rhythm, and a representative argument for its importance is given by John Thompson; discussing Sidney's achievement he writes:

> The art of poetry achieves the degree of sophistication that allows it to recognize its own limitations; for it is seen that speech is one thing and metre another, although the two must meet. With this recognition, the basic resources of the language can be exploited, not as the order of rhetoric but as the order of speech, and consciously so. In Sidney's poetry, this recognition leads to wit. His wit produces frequently in his verse the effect of irony, a light, perhaps only wry irony, but it is enough to make him the master of more than one tone. With the ability to control and change the tone of his speech, he produces the effect of voices speaking, of drama. Through drama comes that effect as of the richness of experience - 'Full, material, circumstantiated' as Lamb said - the effect that has misled most discussions of Astrophel and Stella into biography.[1]

These qualities are now so highly valued that when they are not found in this form, the rhythm which lacks them is felt to be wanting. This is a

1. op. cit. p. 140.

criticism which has been made of Sprung Rhythm, and it is cogently urged by Paul Fussell:

> Tears and O's and Ah's and ecstatic wonder are Hopkins's staples, and it is in the service of these effects that sprung rhythm justifies itself. But the ultimate limitation of sprung rhythm seems to be indicated in Hopkins's own comment: "Sprung rhythm cannot be counterpointed." The system is a scheme of variations which has an insufficient framework to vary from. And after we have seen the abundant riches embodied in techniques of variation from stated and precise public norms, we may be skeptical of the varied expressive possibility of prosodic systems which cannot be counterpointed.[1]

Fussell is guilty of a slight caricature here, since tears and O's and Ah's are not a fair representation of Hopkins's qualities as a poet; further, Fussell omits to add that in another passage where Hopkins says Sprung Rhythm cannot be counterpointed, he goes on to say that his outrides introduce "a strong effect of a double rhythm, of a second movement in the verse besides the primary and essential one, and this comes to the same thing or serves the same purpose as counterpointing by reversed accents as in Milton".[2] This recognition is an important one, and Hopkins built on it as he developed his art. Contrary to Fussell's view, I will argue that in Sprung Rhythm Hopkins did have a

1. Poetic Meter and Poetic Form, New York, Random House, 1979, p. 61. The reference is to the Author's Preface, Poems, p. 47. Fussell does not include an important qualification: "But strict Sprung Rhythm cannot be counterpointed". (My emphasis).

2. CRWD. p. 41. cf. LRB. p. 45, the problems of which I drew attention to earlier.

rhythm which could be counterpointed, but it was obviously counterpointed in a different way, and achieved effects unattainable by any other means; Sprung Rhythm in fact justifies itself in the service of for more than "Tears and O's and Ah's and ecstatic wonder".

It is not necessary to limit the concept of counterpoint to rhythm only, although this is probably the most important kind. A passage from the lecture notes often referred to earlier suggests that for Hopkins it might have had a wider application. Discussing the various ways of relieving monotony in rhythm, Hopkins mentions counterpoint and defines it thus:

> By counterpoint I mean the carrying on of two figures at once, especially if they are alike in kind but very unlike or opposite in species.[1]

Earlier in the notes Hopkins had drawn attention to the principle of Hebrew poetry, its "figure of grammar",[2] that is, the repetition of the same grammatical structure. It would therefore seem at least possible to allow that "figure" can be taken in a more general sense to mean any of the patterns one can find in the sound of a poem, and "counterpoint" as the interplay of two (or perhaps more) different, yet similar, patterns in a poem. Hopkins's fondness for the idea of counterpoint can be accounted for by a characteristically Hopkinsian view of the device: it is both like and unlike, and as we saw in Chapter 7 the perception of likeness within unlikeness, of variety

1. JP. p. 280.

2. ibid. p. 267.

within similarity, is a fundamental law of aesthetics for Hopkins. Thus if we have two trochees substituted for two iambs in a line of poetry we have something like in kind (a figure of rhythm, having the same number of syllables and the same kind of stress and slack accentuation) but unlike in species (the pattern of stress and slack is reversed), and in the relations and contrasts that exist in a case like this lie our sense of pleasure and beauty. In addition to this though, and in this context probably a more important reason why Hopkins felt counterpoint to be profoundly significant in poetry, there is another factor: counterpoint, whether in music or poetry, always involves tension and conflict. For example, where we have a musical counterpoint of two or three melodic lines moving in different directions on the scale, sometimes in harmony and sometimes in disharmony, and with contrasting and changing rhythms, giving a syncopated, continually modified character to the music, we have an increase in unlikeness within unlikeness to the point where our faculties are straining to grasp and reconcile conflicting elements, each demanding to fulfil itself and the work as a whole. (A good example of this kind of experience is the E♭ organ Trio by J. S. Bach). The sense of strain and conflict leading to resolution (usually a cathartic and pleasurable experience as the opposed elements are dissolved or reconciled and the tension released) is of central importance to poetry and accords well both with Hopkins's temperament and his outlook on life. Counterpoint of various kinds can help to create the sense of tension or conflict in an experience, and by being withdrawn or altered can suggest some kind of resolution. In the case of rhythmic counterpoint it must be stressed that a purely rhythmic resolution of any conflicts generated does not exist; as Seymour Chatman has

observed,[1] rhythm and metre are too unspecific to allow of that kind of fineness of judgement. If we feel a resolution - the rhythm might appear smoother for example - the sense is to a very great extent moulding the way we perceive the rhythm.

It will be useful, before we start in on the main discussion, to have before us some of the questions about counterpoint which have a bearing on the main subject. If the poems are in some senses "dramatic" and ideally require a performance, how much does counterpoint contribute to these characteristics? Does counterpoint develop elements in the poetry which are analogous to characteristic features of drama such as conflicts between or within characters, and the formal shape of the plots? Does counterpointed poetry (at least in Hopkins's case) require a specialised approach in speaking it, which would suggest that he designed it so that only a careful and sensitive performance can do full justice to it? Space will not allow me to deal with all the possible kinds of counterpoint, so I will discuss the two kinds most important in Hopkins's poetry - counterpointed rhythm and counterpointed syntax - and from there the discussion will go on to consider a kind of "counterpoint" which is removed from Hopkins's original conception but is a natural outgrowth from it. This is the interplay of various voices or "characters" in a number of the poems. At this point it is worth emphasizing that the term "counterpoint" is used in a figurative sense, and the range of its application can vary widely, from being relatively close to its musical original to a rather looser usage.

Hopkins's best-known discussion of rhythmical counterpoint is

1. op. cit. pp. 203-204, 222.

probably the brief statement in the Author's Preface, and to this day it remains of some general value in understanding the issue:

> If however the reversal is repeated in two feet running, especially so as to include the sensitive second foot, it must be due either to great want of ear or else is a calculated effect, the superinducing or mounting of a new rhythm upon the old; and since the new or mounted rhythm is actually heard and at the same time the mind naturally supplies the natural or standard foregoing rhythm, for we do not forget what the rhythm is that by rights we should be hearing, two rhythms are in some manner running at once and we have something answerable to counterpoint in music, which is two or more strains of tune going on together, and this is Counterpoint Rhythm.[1]

Unfortunately, neither in the Preface nor in his letters does Hopkins explain what effects counterpointed rhythm will have, though in his case we can usually assume that it is a "calculated effect" of one kind or another. Perhaps the most obvious effect is that of emphasizing the phrases counterpointed, an emphasis which may extend to the whole line if the counterpoint occurs in the first two feet. A few examples will help to make this clear:

The world | is charged | with the | grandeur | of God.[2]

1. Poems, Preface, p. 46.
2. Poems, 31, p. 66. I follow Hopkins in using ⌣ as a sign for counterpoint rhythm.

In this line the counterpoint comes late in the line and is not very strong. We can place a little more emphasis on "with" than on "the", but too much will make the line sound awkward. This reduces the counterpointing, but throws great weight onto "grandeur" in the next foot, clearly an important rhythmic shift. The effect in this instance is of a counterpoint rhythm beginning subtly and gathering strength at once to make its point before reverting to the iambic ground rhythm. In the next lines from the same poem, something rather different is taking place:

like | the ooze | of oil
Crushed. Why | do men |, then now | not reck | his rod?
Gener|ations | have trod, | have trod, | have trod;

To my ear, the very strong stress on "Crushed", emphasized by our expectation of a light stress in that position, begins a rhythmic change which leads to the counterpoint at the beginning of the next line, which in turn modifies the way we perceive the remainder of the line. From the point of view of the metre, this line is not that much out of the ordinary, except for the initial "spondee":

Crúshed. Whý | dŏ mén | thĕn nów | nŏt rĕck | hĭs ród?

However, these powerful monosyllables demand a rhythm which is not at all a conventional iambic pentameter. Both "then" and "not" demand more emphasis in speaking than the metre allows and it might be argued that "his" can bear a shade more stress than "do", but not as much as "then" and "not". Thus I would read this line with a rhythm something like this:

```
                                                  a    (a)
                                                 (4 =  4)
a          a   3          2          3 =  4      3
4          4 | 2  4  |  3 =  4  |  4 =  3  |  2    4
Crushed.  Why | do men | then now | not reck | his rod?
```

The stress on "then" may be rather different from that, for example, on "Crushed". The vowel may be fractionally extended, and be followed by a short pause; this will not only give the meaning of the word greater emphasis (indicated by what has been said in the first three lines), but suggest the pause of the mind as it considers man's refusal or inability to respond adequately to the God revealed in creation, and then its reaching forward for words to convey the feelings which this lack of response and God's authority and power creates. These intermingled feelings sit uneasily together, something apparent in the stressed and awkward rhythm of the line - as I mentioned in Chapter 7 an early example of what Hopkins was later to call "Common rhythm highly stressed".[1] This change of mood seems to have been triggered by the weight and power of "Crushed", coming by itself at the head of the line, in a position usually held by an unstressed syllable, and the unease it has generated has taken over by the next line. The counterpoint of line 5 marks not only the need to take note of the importance of "Generations", but also the arrival of a new mood, or "voice". The weight of the trochees in "Generations" overlaying the iambic ground rhythm emphasizes the "mammocking"[2] tread of countless generations, but it also signifies the full appearance of a sombre, half-despairing voice, caught in the contrast between the glory of the natural world, and the soiled, degraded

1. Poems, p. 285.

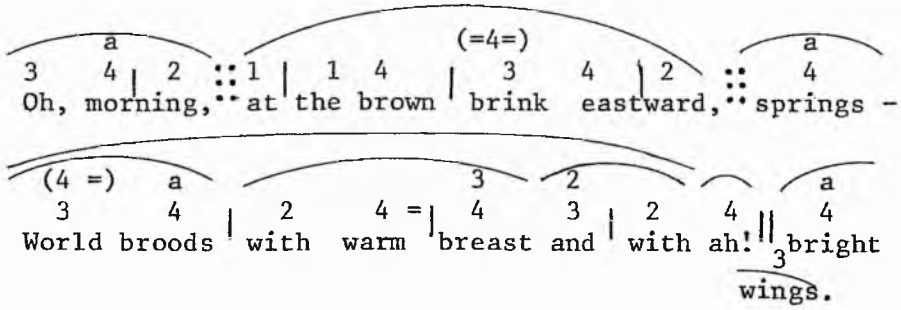
2. See "Tom's Garland", line 12, Poems, 70, p. 103.

environment man is creating around himself. The conflicts this contrast generates in the speaker are also mirrored in the tensions we can sense in the counterpointing of the rhythms.

In the sestet, the conflict is not so much resolved as taken up into the realisation that for all man can do, nature is perennially renewed. The contrast between what God and man have made remains, but it is made less significant in the presence of the even more moving realization that God is forever present, always guarding, restoring, creating anew. The delight Hopkins feels is realized in the rhythm, not by a dialectic, but simply by a lightening or easing of the movement. In much of the octave the rhythm tends to follow quite closely the pattern of slack and stress of the metre, as the following lines indicate:

Generations | hăve tród, | hăve tród, | hăve tród;
Ănd wéars | măn's smúdge | ănd sháres | măn's sméll: ||
thĕ sóil

There is a corresponding formality in the tone, and it is worth noting too the careful, measured phrases and periods Hopkins has used. But in the sestet, this changes, and in the following lines, an ease and joy emerge in the more informal, exultant tone and the shift away from the metre:



In a way all these various elements of rhythm, tone and syntax are "counterpointed", since the octave has predisposed us to expect one type in each case, instead of which in the second part of the poem we meet others, and out of the contrast emerges the deeper significance of the sestet. (We might note in passing that although the sestet is concerned in the main with the renewal of the creation by the Holy Spirit, there glimmers behind the lines the implication that in man too there lives a freshness, and a morning can spring for him, being a part of, and indeed, the pinnacle of creation).

By way of comparison to counterpoint in common rhythm, I would like to consider now the ways in which Hopkins counterpoints Sprung Rhythm, in particular the effects of outrides, for which Hopkins specifically claimed some counterpointing effects. I noted in the chapter on rhythm the curious contradiction Hopkins held in 1877 about outrides, apparently saying on the one hand that they can counterpoint only common rhythm, and hence cannot be used in Sprung Rhythm, and yet writing two poems in Sprung Rhythm with outrides.[1] Only a little later, Hopkins had clearly developed his thinking on outrides, as he explained in a letter to Dixon:

> Sprung Rhythm does not properly require or allow of counterpoint. It does not require it, because its great variety amounts to a counterpointing, and it scarcely allows of it, because you have scarcely got in it that conventionally fixed form which you can mentally supply at the time when you are actually reading another one - ...

* * *

1. LRB. p. 45. See pp. 212-215.

> However by means of the 'outrides' or looped half-feet you will find in some of my sonnets and elsewhere I secure a strong effect of double rhythm, of a second movement in the verse besides the primary and essential one, and this comes to the same thing or serves the same purpose as counterpointing by reversed accents as in Milton.[1]

There are two points to deal with here. The first is that Sprung Rhythm's "great variety amounts to a counterpointing": this seems true only in a very limited sense. Counterpointing depends on the interplay of two fairly well defined patterns, and a variety of feet occurring in a haphazard order can only counterpoint in a small and very local way. An example of this is in these lines from The Wreck of the Deutschland

> Thě swóon|ŏf ă héart|thăt thě swéep|ănd thě húrl|ŏf thěe
> tród|
> Hárd|dówn|with ă hórror|ŏf héight.|[2]

Here the successive onrushing anapaests are pulled hard up against the two monosyllabic feet, and then the anapaests return in the magnificent phrase which ends this sentence. This is a powerful device, but even here it depends on the anapaests before it for its effects, and I doubt if a line like the following relies very much for its rhythmic impact on counterpointing by variety:

> As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl
> and gliding

1. CRWD. pp. 40-41.
2. St. 2, Poems, p. 52.

The second point is Hopkins's suggestion that his outrides introduce a "double rhythm" or "second movement" in the verse. In a note to "Hurrahing in Harvest" he explains more clearly what he means:

> Take notice that the outriding feet are not to be confused with dactyls and paeons, though sometimes the line might be scanned either way. The strong syllable in an outriding foot has always a great stress and after the outrider follows a short pause. The paeon is easier and more flowing.[1]

In some cases the outriding foot obviously has the characteristics outlined here - greater emphasis on the stress preceding the outriding syllables and the whole foot followed by a short pause:

> Summer énds now;| now, ...[2]

But in other cases they are not at all clear:

> Summer énds now;| now, bárbarous| in beauty,| the stooks| rise
>
> Breathing| bloom| of chástity| in mansex| fine.|[3]
>
> Forward like,| but hówever, and| like favourable| heaven|
>
> heard these.|[4]

1. ibid. p. 269.
2. ibid. 38, p. 20-70.
3. ibid. 48, p. 82.
4. ibid. p. 83.

In still other instances we have lines where an outride could conceivably be present, but Hopkins has not put one:

I caught | this morning | morning's | minion, | king-[1]

In his ecstasy! | then off, | off | forth | on swing, |[2]

Or we have a line which could have an additional outride:

Shivelights | and shadowtackle | in long || lashes | lace,
lance, | and pair. |[3]

It is difficult to find a satisfactory degree of consistency in Hopkins's use of outrides, but there is one way of resolving some of these problems: where there is an outride which clearly follows the theory, as in "Summer ends now," there is little difficulty - the greater stress, the extra syllables, and the pause, all lend the line that "second movement" Hopkins speaks of; in the other cases though, where we meet our difficulties, the outrides are best thought of as directives for performance, much like the elisions, hurried feet and dwells.[4] Like some musical

1. ibid., 36, p. 69. The mark > , indicating a strong stress, is in MSS A_1 and A_2.

2. ibid. This line originally read, "in his ecstasy! then off, : forth on swing" which suggests that GMH perhaps intended the last syllable of "ecstasy" to carry a stress, but for Sprung Rhythm this is a very weak stress and is contradictory to its nature as a sense - stress rhythm, which may be why in 1883 or thereabouts GMH amended the line to the form we have it in now. W. H. Gardner (Vol.1, p. 99) scans with two stresses in "ecstasy", but the scansion given here is truer to the rhythm and has a characteristic Hopkinsian movement.

3. ibid., 72, p. 105.

4. ie. ◠ or ^ ; see Poems p. 293.

notation, the directive does not make explicit what is already implicit, but adds a detachable expressive effect: read as Hopkins suggests they often give a line greater resonance - the rhythmic adjustments in particular can pinpoint a greater intensity of feeling, a sharpening of an image, or change of direction in thought or tone; the closing tercet of "The Windhover", with its quieter mood, opens with an outriding foot:

> No wónder of it: | shéer | plód | makes plough | down sillion |
> Shine, | and blúe-bleak | embers, | ah | my dear, |
> Fall, gáll | themsélves, | and gásh | góld-vermilion.[1]

The outride can counterpoint in two different ways. Both of these are based on the idea that the feet in Sprung Rhythm are taken to be equal in length or strength. Since we listen for, and to some extent create, equality of this kind in the feet, an outriding foot, read properly, counterpoints the line both by increasing the strength in the foot - with the stronger stress and the pause (if there are more syllables in the outriding half of the foot than is common in the other feet with slack syllables after the stress, then this too adds strength) - and by increasing the duration of the foot, for the same reasons. We thus have a foot which is longer and stronger than it would normally be, even in

1. ibid., 36, p. 69. The mark > is in MSS A_1 and A_2. A propos of the question of external directions, it is useful to compare the illustration above with the opening line of The Wreck of the Deutschland, which GMH scans as "Thóu mastering mé//God"; the directive here brings out a meaning not at all obvious and yet it is important in fixing the Divine and human polarities of the poem and the relationship which is at its centre. Thus although the line is awkward to read as GMH directed, it has a significance we would be reluctant to do without once we had grasped how important it is; it might even be argued that the tension and awkwardness in the line reflect the tensions which dominate the poem, and have a curious kind of beauty we would also not like to do without.

a slow, emphatic reading, and perhaps stronger than most of the feet in the poem, giving it great weight and significance. At the same time, the outride introduces a break in the rhythm, a momentary pause as though, in Hopkins's words, "the voice were silently making its way back to the highroad of the verse".[1] This not only gives emphasis to the outriding foot but modifies the way the succeeding feet are read, and hence their significance as well. Something of this can be seen in the following lines from "Duns Scotus's Oxford":

> The dapple-eared lily below thee; that country and town did
> Once encounter in, here coped and poisèd powers;[2]

Here the second outride, by throwing greater weight on "encounter", calls attention to the significance of the word, while the pause strengthens the break in the rhythm created by the comma; together these slow the forward movement of the line and make us read the last three feet with a slower, carefully timed rhythm, balancing phrase against phrase and enunciating the consonant- and vowel-rhyme in order to convey the "encountering" of town and country in a harmonious balance of strength.

The second way in which outrides counterpoint Sprung Rhythm was examined earlier in Chapter 7, and is an outgrowth of the first. In a discussion of a line from "The Windhover" ("Of the rolling level underneath him steady air"[3]), I discussed the way in which the outrides Hopkins had marked required a recitation which ran counter to the

1. ibid. p. 293.
2. ibid. 44, p. 79.
3. See pp. 239, 241-242.

way we would normally read the line and suggested the flight of the bird in the tensions created between two possible rhythms. In this instance, the device is very successful, but it should be said that some outrides seem to serve little purpose ("The Bugler's First Communion" provides some good examples), and one is puzzled by the presence of these inconsistences when in most cases Hopkins exhibits a mastery which vindicates his ideas even as it reveals the sensitivity of his ear.

"That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" has a large number of outrides, and it illustrates what Hopkins can do with the device. There are nineteen in all, and eighteen occur in the first fourteen lines, with the last in the final line.[1] This distribution seems to me significant, especially in conjunction with the fact that the hurried feet (eight of them) are grouped in lines 12 to 21. The broad pattern is thus outrides in the sonnet proper (seventeen occur before line 12), hurried feet in lines 12 to 21, and in the final four lines there is a solitary outride.

> Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt forth, then chevy on an air-
> built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs | they throng; they glitter in marches.
> Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, | wherever an elm arches,
> Shivelights and shadowtackle in long | lashes lace, lance, and pair.

1. See the notes to the poem in Poems. p. 294. These notes omit an outride in "indignation" (line 13) marked in the MS.

Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles, beats
earth bare
Of yestertempest's creases; | in pool and rutpeel parches
Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches,
starches
Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there
Footfretted in it. Million-fuelèd, | nature's bonfire burns on.
But quench her bonniest, dearest | to her, her clearest-selvèd
spark
Man, how fast his firedint, | his mark on mind, is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O pity and indig | nation! Manshape, that shone
Sheer off, disseveral, a star, | death blots black out; nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time | beats level. Enough! the Resur-
rection,
A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, | joyless days, de-
jection.
Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. | Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; | world's wildfire, leave but ash:
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, | since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, | patch, matchwood, immortal
diamond,
Is immortal diamond.

If we read the outrides and hurried feet as Hopkins directed[1] (and it is

1. The instructions for "Harry Ploughman", being nearest in time to this poem, are perhaps the most pertinent: "(5) ⌒ ='slur' tying two syllables into the time of one; (6) ⌒⌒⌒ 'over three or more syllables gives them the time of one half foot'; (7) ⌒ = 'the outride; under one or more syllables makes them extrametrical: a slight pause follows as if the voice were silently making its way back to the highroad of the verse'." Poems, p. 293.

important to stress here that more than nearly all other of Hopkins's innovations, these depend on being heard for their effect to be felt), the sections of the poem where they dominate are subtly and meaningfully discriminated in mood and character. The first fourteen lines would have on the whole a greater degree of stress than the rest of the poem because of the more emphatic stresses required by the outriding feet, and the pausing movement in the verse will be accentuated, giving a number of key words more weight, and creating, in contrast to the hurried feet, a generally slower and powerful rhythm. The outrides, it will be noted, are generally in or near nouns and adjectives, which draws attention to natural objects and the way, with their characteristic qualities, they are caught up in the endless process of existence, and are, as well, agents of disintegration. In some contrast to this, the second section (lines 12-24) with only one outride and the eight hurried feet increases the tempo, lowers the overall degree of emphasis on the lines and modifies the rhythm so that it has a more urgent forward movement. These nine lines are the nadir of the emotional descent and rise in the poem, and the course of Hopkins's emotions through the sonnet proper are figured in the change from outride to hurried feet: in the first quatrain he delightedly considers natural change and movement; in the second he watches in deepening disquiet the gradual breaking down of the world into a meaningless chaos, as the wind turns pool and earth and the patterns of man's labour into a shapeless dusty patch; then, in the sestet, as he sees man's fading away into a huge, empty void his anger, fear and despair, and piteousness gather to their greatest intensity. The strength and tension of these emotions are felt in the alternating hurry of the tied syllables and the slower movement of the intervening verse:

nor mark

Is ány of him at áll so stárk

But vastness blurs and time beats level.

It is significant that amidst the flux and pressure of these thoughts, there is one word singled out with an outride - "O pity and indignation!" The subtly different movement, with the more emphatic stress, beautifully "inscapes" the feeling as it underlines with the pause its connection to what is before and after. Another factor which makes these four words a little tour de force is the way "Resurrection" a few lines later picks up the rhyme and the rhythm of "indignation!" and in an instant triumphantly reverses all the piteous and puzzled, half-defiant despair of the earlier phrase.

The triumphant peace which the speaker experiences in the closing stage of the poem is felt by the reader partly because of the poise and more relaxed flow of the rhythm (which the thought and feeling at this point demands), and this is largely a result of the absence of hurried feet and outrides, excepting the one noted before; and even this has its purpose in underlining the Job reference,[1] and building the tension in its pause for the line's developing climax. When we come later to consider the syntax of this poem, we will see how the rhythmic development we have traced has its parallels in the syntactical development, but for the moment we must evaluate what has emerged in the discussion of counterpointed rhythm.

Perhaps one of the most significant things to emerge from the discussion is that there are in fact two kinds of rhythmic counterpoint, both of which rely, though in rather different ways, on the interplay

1. The reference is to Job 2.8. cf. also Jeremiah 19.

between a mentally supplied rhythm and a differing one in the actual words. There is first the kind Hopkins defines in his letters and Preface, what I shall call local counterpoint, occurring in common and sprung rhythm. Its name exactly defines it; as we saw in "God's Grandeur" and "Heraclitean Fire", counterpoint consisting in the "mounting of a new rhythm upon the old", is restricted to specific places and can signal a change of mood, a transition in thought (as in the former poem), or, in the latter, pinpoint important words, develop nodes of thought, carefully modulate the course of an emotion developing around an idea. Other poems would show up a number of differing effects, but in many cases the counterpoint will mirror a change in the poem's thought and feeling which has its source in some tension, contradiction or conflict. The lines from "God's Grandeur" illustrated this well. How significant this is is only fully apparent in the context of the second type of counterpoint, which I will call extended counterpoint.

Extended counterpoint is used most skilfully in both the poems we have analysed so far. In "God's Grandeur" we saw how the rhythm of the octave tended to follow that of the metrical abstract (especially in the second quatrain, where the increased regularity deepens our awareness of the soiling oppressiveness of man's labouring), whereas in the sestet the rhythm loosened itself from the metre, and found a freedom fitting the uplift in the poet's mood.[1] In "Heraclitean Fire" the extended

1. The freer rhythm of the sestet of "God's Grandeur" is a good example of the kind of counterpoint, or "syncopation" as he prefers to call it, discussed by Roger Fowler in "'Prose Rhythm' and Metre" op. cit. pp. 82-99, and indicates both how useful Fowler's distinctions are and how skilful Hopkins is at exploiting the various options open to him.

counterpoint developed in three stages, each finely discriminated in its rhythms from the others, and each of the rhythms discovering - in itself and in its contrasts with the other two - the tonal and emotional development of the poem. Each change in the mood emerges of course from the transitions in the thought, but as I hope to show a little later, this is more than a case of the emotions trailing after the mind. In extended counterpoint, the interplay is perhaps in some degree caused by the superimposing of one rhythm upon another, but it is distinguished more by the contrasts and interaction between two or more slightly different rhythms occurring in different parts of a poem, usually in sections of three or four lines or more.

At the simplest level, these two kinds of counterpoint introduce variety and complexity, saving the poetry from being "same and tame", as Hopkins puts it.[1] And there is too the possibility that the rhythmic complexity will inhibit any facile responses to the poems.[2] But these are small points, and need not keep us. The most important consequences of counterpointed rhythms lie elsewhere, in two main areas.

First, local counterpoint, and most especially local counterpoint in common rhythm,[3] occurs frequently at points where the poet's emotions intensify; this may simply be a strengthening of emotion already articulated, as in:

1. Poems, p. 46.

2. A notable example is Yvor Winters', which seems to me to be in part the result of a failure to appreciate the complexity of Hopkins's rhythms, or what he was trying to do with them.

3. Counterpoint in common rhythm can be extended through several feet, whereas in sprung rhythm it cannot get beyond a half foot, and this fact enables the poet to extend the effects of counterpoint much further in common rhythm. In sprung rhythm, local counterpoint can only have a subtle and relatively circumscribed influence.

Buy then! | bid then! | – What? – Práyer, | pátience, | alms, vóws.[1]

or in:

Lovely | the wóods, | waters, | meadows, | combes, váles.[2]

In contrast to this is an intensification of feelings, but this time new or mixed ones, created by a conflict or contradiction in the poet's mind, or in his subject. Frequently in Hopkins these points of conflict occur at significant points in the formal structure of the poems (especially in the sonnets), and mark transitions from one part of the "argument" to another. In "God's Grandeur" the counterpoint is at the beginning of the second quatrain, and crystallises the jarring contrast between the flaming or gathering of God's glory in creation and the way man's toil persistently soils and conceals the glory. In the next example, the counterpoint occurs at the opening of the sestet, very often a crucial moment in a sonnet:

Come you | indoors, | come home; | your fading fire[3]

This is an interesting example, since the previous line has an emphatic iambic rhythm, with an anapaestic substitution in the second foot, and these factors give the line a firm forward movement, broken by the strong pauses:

1. Poems, 32, p. 67.
2. Poems, 34, p. 68.
3. ibid. 46, p. 81. (Hopkins does not mark this counterpoint).

the eagerer a-wanting Jessy or Jack
There/God | to aggrándise, God | to glorify.

In contrast, the counterpointed ninth line has a slower but less emphatic rhythm, suggesting contrition in its more reflective tone. At the same time, the reversal of the feet conveys not only the strength of the rebuke the speaker gives himself by calling attention to words not normally given as much stress as the counterpoint requires here ("Come", "your"), but marks the most significant transition in the poem's thought - from the thoughts developed around the literal "candle indoors" to the metaphorical and more important one within the speaker. The sudden, sharp, inward look and the recoil from his earlier thoughts are very effectively captured by the tensions of the counterpoint,[1] and mark this point of the poem with a special intensity. Thus, by using counterpoint at crucial points in the formal structure of his poems Hopkins shapes their emotional and intellectual development more precisely, and underscores the conventional patterns of his forms: in these cases we are dealing with a more than usually formal rhythmic structure, and the poems gain considerably from the unity in form and thought and feeling.

The second and more important aspect of counterpoint is a development from the last one. In some of Hopkins's poems local counterpoint does not make any significant change to the rhythms of the lines which

1. The counterpoint is actually quite complex: it is possible to preserve the trochaic movement throughout the first four feet by raising the pitch on the first syllable in each case, and yet at the same time one can suggest the importance of "you" and "home" by lengthening these syllables - the sense encourages these emphases - so that there is not only counterpoint by reversed feet in the line but also a tension between pitch and length, in which the sense and the iambic ground rhythm are asserting themselves against the counterpoint.

follow it:

Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me?[1]

In other poems, however, the counterpoint does signal the emergence of a rhythm different from what has gone before. In other words, local counterpoint is important to the development of extended counterpoint in some poems. We saw this in the octave of "God's Grandeur", but "The Lantern out of Doors" has an interesting variation. I pointed out in Chapter 7 that the sestet of this poem opens with a sprung foot:

:Death or distance soon consumes them: wind[2]

The great emphasis on "Death" here has a similar effect to the counterpoint in "The Candle Indoors" in the way it marks a key moment; the full significance of his metaphor of the lantern swallowed up in "an enormous dark" is now grasped, and the remainder of this tercet completes the poet's sense of helplessness in the face of death:

1. Poems, 74, p. 106. The MS does not mark "why must" as I have done, but it is a reasonable scansion, and I would add, more reasonable than "why must" or "why must". Using the numerical notation it could be scanned "why must" to give "must" greater emphasis.

2. ibid. 40, p. 71. See p. 255.

Death or distance soon consumes them; wind
What most I may eye after, be in at the end
I cannot, and out of sight is out of mind.

But in the second tercet he finds his answer;

Chrís̆t mĭnds: | Chrís̆t's ín | tĕrest, whát | tŏ ~ avów | ŏr ~ amend
There, éyes | thĕm, hĕart wánts, | cărе háunts, | fóot fól | lŏws
kínd,
Thĕir rán | sŏm, thĕir | rés̆cue, ~ ánd | fĭrst, fást, | lăst fríend.

The change in the rhythm is considerable; from being fairly conventional (though not the less skilful) it becomes noticeably more stressy, sprung, and freer yet more awkward in its movements. The emotional mood, the tone of the poem, has altered greatly; within this new rhythm one can detect the satisfaction and elation the poet experiences in finding a complete answer to the helplessness he felt in the face of death's absoluteness (the rhyme of "end" with "friend" neatly underlines the reversal too). Combined in this way, local and extended counterpoint create an extended formal pattern or "plot" in the rhythmic structure of a poem.

The analogy with a plot is not too far-fetched: considered in their barest essentials, the plots of nearly all plays and novels, whether tragic or comic, consist in a story revolving around some conflicts, either between characters, or if they are within characters, between interests, conscience and desire, love and hatred, personality factors, and so on. A complex plot may have several moments at which the conflicts come to a head, whereas in a simple plot there may be one such moment; but in both cases the pattern is one of moving from conflict to resolution and calm, in whatever type of play or novel. The tensions

and instability of these moments make them a little like pivots, around which the plot turns. Shakespeare's plots illustrate this well, and Macbeth has probably the best-known example in the scene just before Duncan is murdered. As Macbeth argues the case back and forth with himself, and then with Lady Macbeth, the play is held poised between two possible courses, the tension rising as the struggle in Macbeth and between him and his wife deepens; but with the decision made, the tension breaks, and the play turns onto a course it follows to the end. A similar decisive moment occurs in Pride and Prejudice just after Darcy presents his long explanatory letter to Elizabeth, and her struggle to reconcile the dash of opinion and feelings about Darcy and Wickham (and herself) shifts the course of the novel completely. In considerable contrast to this kind of plot is the one favoured in popular novels, in which a tangle of conflicts is denied resolution until the very end, when the work is given its dénouement. This has its uses in serious literature though, as Henry James's fine novel The Bostonians, and The Winter's Tale testify.[1] It is significant though that the "plots" of Hopkins's poems have the former pattern: some develop in stages, passing through a moment, or perhaps two or three, where contradictory attitudes, experiences and feelings gather thickly, giving the poem points of particularly intense feeling, and at those crucial points shaping the next stage in the poem's development; others, as we saw in the "Heraclitean Fire" sonnet, move with hardly noticeable transitions from one stage to the next, and yet in various ways each is broadly distinguished from the others. This characteristic structure emphasizes the way the two kinds of counterpoint, separately or in conjunction, enable

1. The nearest and best known equivalent in poetry is probably the Shakespearian or English sonnet.

Hopkins to give full play to all the conflicting and shifting forces in himself and his experience of life by intensifying the interaction of rhythms which are in some respect alike, but in others very unlike. It should be stressed at this point that rhythms are chameleon-like in that they take on the emotional colour and tone of the words which shape them. Thus although the tempo and pattern of some rhythms (for example, a drum beat, or triple time) have accumulated particular connotations, I would not suggest that the rhythmic patterns we have discussed have any intrinsic meaning; verbal rhythms are too complex and too much part of the whole significance of the words which form them to assert that independence. All that verbal rhythms can do is convey, or help convey, the dynamics of the emotions projected by the words, but they cannot convey their nature, or their objects or referents. Furthermore, where Hopkins has used Sprung Rhythm, he has freed his rhythms (at least to some extent) from the associations which the various metres of syllabic-stress verse have accumulated over the centuries, and this is one reason why Hopkins's poems have such freshness and strength, since where he succeeds he has rhythms both new and more exactly attuned to the verse's meaning and tone.[1]

One further point about the "plotting" of Hopkins's poems is the presence in them of the poet in two different guises. At one level is the poet as the ordinary human protagonist, caught in the experience of

1. cf. the following from the letter to Everard Hopkins from the poet: "Now emphasis itself, stress, is one of these [essential elements of speech]: sprung rhythm makes verse stressy; it purges it to an emphasis as much brighter, livelier, more lustrous than the regular but commonplace emphasis of common rhythm as poetry in general is brighter than common speech. But this it does by a return from that regular emphasis towards, not up to[,] the more picturesque irregular emphasis of talk - without however becoming itself lawlessly irregular." TLS, op. cit., column 3.

the poem, and at another is the poet as artist, placing the various elements and shaping the whole experience into an aesthetically satisfying whole. This is a quality Hopkins's poetry shares with most if not all lyric verse, but we are likely to be much more aware of it in Hopkins because he sharpens up the distinctions between the two. The pressure of feeling and thought in his poems, and the sense that the speaker of the poems is in the immediate moment of experience emphasizes the one element, while the elaborate, overt artistic formality emphasizes the other. In consequence we are far more aware both of the extent of the dramatic projection and of the complexity of the vision in the poems.

The idea that lyric poems have a kind of "plot" analogous to that of drama or the novel is not a new one, though it may appear in different guises. The significant thing is what Hopkins has done with it. Broadly speaking there are two ways in which his practice contributes to our understanding of the dramatic nature of his verse. Ishould say first that the "plot" of a poem is much closer to drama than to the novel, since in the latter much of the plot is unfolded through narrative and comment, whereas in both drama and poetry the plot is played out directly before our eyes in one way or another. This parallel is extended in another area: in drama actors flesh out the characters and plot; in poetry of the kind Hopkins wrote devices like rhyme, rhythm and alliteration are heavily foregrounded and made to carry a substantial burden in realising and extending the meaning of a poem; in this sense, counterpoint is one of the more effective devices for giving Hopkins's poems the feel of drama - that sense of inner, autonomous development through the interaction or conflict of different elements, and yet, viewed from without, having a shape painstakingly crafted, Yet (to make a point made before, but in a new context) one of the most important

parallels between drama and Hopkins's poetry is the need they share to be discovered in performance. The difference between reading a play and seeing a performance of it (or taking part in a performance oneself) is much the same as that between analysing a Hopkins poem or reading it to oneself silently, and reading it aloud, with all our faculties engaged, and with the poem being experienced in all its concreteness as speech. The distinction is also one betwen savoir and connaître,[1] between knowing of, and knowing from within, having it "proved upon our pulses". Hopkins, as a man and a poet, was not content with mental assent, but insisted for himself, and asks from his readers, the assent of the whole man. The articulation of the movement and muscular feel of Hopkins's rhythms is a way of securing a far more complete and intimate knowledge of any poem, but this involves more than simply "possessing" the poem; for a while the poem "possesses" the reader, and in this brief period of intense engagement and self-forgetfulness lies the kind of assent Hopkins's poetry requires.

The second way in which counterpoint contributes to the dramatic characteristics of the poems has been touched on already, and that is the shape or structure the poems tend to have. I noted earlier (pages 320-326) the relation between the counterpointed rhythms of Hopkins's poems and the development of the thought and feeling, and it is this aspect in particular I would like to explore further. One great advantage of the kind of "plot" Hopkins favoured is that a due proportion is maintained between the beginning, middle and end, and the content of each stage has adequate space for development.[2] The Italian sonnet inevitably gives

1. I owe this distinction to C. S. Lewis, but unfortunately I cannot trace the reference.

2. cf. Aristotle's strictures on the form of a play in "On the Art of Poetry", Classical Literary Criticism, (Trans. T.S. Dorsch) Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, Chaps. 7,8,10,11.

this shape to a poem, but it is a form Hopkins evidently found most congenial, and a number of the other poems have the same balance.[1] However, it is more than a question of formal balance: the inner energy of these poems has a momentum and shape equally carefully designed. The feelings in any part of a poem are sensed by the reader in the choice of words (certain words not only defining it in an approximate way but also suggesting the degree of emotion), in the context made by the words, and in the dramatic situation the poem adopts (that is, who is speaking and to whom, where, and how - all these indicate what tones are appropriate to what is being said). These factors are among the more important in helping us to explore and define the emotional contours of a poem, but in Hopkins we have another aspect to the problem. A very large proportion of Hopkins's poems obviously contain and are the result of powerful and deeply-felt emotions, and this is one reason why he needed and developed Sprung Rhythm: its great vigour and suppleness were exactly what he needed to express the character of his feelings. The rhythms are the means by which the feelings are apprehended, for poet and reader, and in both cases the effect, again, is to involve the whole man, or to use Hopkins's own vivid expression, to "flush the man",

1. Of the forty-eight complete mature poems, thirty-three are sonnets, three are curtal sonnets (including "(Ashboughs)"), and a number of the remainder have a three or four part structure, either in stanzas, or a concealed underlying pattern; on the whole these have a fairly spacious end, in some contrast to the pithy, abrupt closure of the Shakespearian sonnet, and some metaphysical poetry. The one exception I could find was "Morning, Midday, and Evening Sacrifice", which has something of the feel of a sudden ending:

> The vault and scope and schooling
> And mastery in the mind,
> In silk-ash kept from cooling,
> And ripest under rind -
> What death half lifts the latch of,
> What hell hopes soon the snatch of,
> Your offering, with despatch, of!
>
> (Poems, 49, p. 84).

to suffuse his entire being with the particular character of the experience. (In passing it is worth mentioning again the point made in Chapter 7, that in the later poems in common rhythm, the rhythms are often highly stressed, and have the occasional sprung foot or the awkward movement of a line in Sprung Rhythm, which suggest that Hopkins was developing common rhythm to serve similar aims to Sprung Rhythm in this regard, but without losing the character of common rhythm, or its great advantage - the capacity for counterpoint). But the problem with more than usually powerful feelings in poetry is that they are unruly, and can dominate the poem or distort the form. It is hardly a coincidence that the word Yvor Winters used to express his dislike of Hopkins's rhythms and emotions is the same used by Hopkins to describe his rhythms when they are read incorrectly - violence:[1]

> Indeed when, on somebody returning me the Eurydice, I opened and read some lines, reading, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right.[2]

One of the more important things that can be adduced from Hopkins's remarks here is that although his verse does have an unusual strength of feeling, reading with the ears enables the rhythms to control and channel the emotions in a manner which does not mitigate their strength or spontaneity, but which does make them part of an order and allows

1. op. cit. p. 119.

2. LRB. p. 79.

them to serve ends other than simply the expression of strong feeling. And what Hopkins said about greater rhythmic freedom demanding greater strictness applies equally to stronger feelings; they require greater control.[1] If we re-examine the poems we looked at earlier - "God's Grandeur", "Heraclitean Fire" and "The Lantern out of Doors" - in the light of these considerations, their rhythmic complexity reveals a high degree of order and subtlety in a dimension in which we would expect these to be difficult to achieve, at least on the face of it, since Hopkins is so often working with such deeply-felt and powerful feelings.

The lines from "Heraclitean Fire" which follow help to explain these points. This group comes from the opening stage of the poem, which is dominated by outriding feet:

> ... heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs they throng;
> they glitter in marches.
>
> (11.2-3)

> Million-fuelèd, nature's bonfire burns on.
> But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-
> selvèd spark
> Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind, is gone!
>
> (11.9-11)

One thing to notice here is the way the outrides, when we take account of them in our reading, reveal how carefully controlled the rhythms are: in the first example, the slightly stronger stresses on "roy-..." and "gay-" and "march-..." bring out the festive joy of these airy revellers;

1. LRB. pp. 44-45, FL p. 335.

further, the slight pause after "gay-gangs" helps to emphasize the falling rhythms which have dominated the previous three feet ("on an áir-/ bŭilt | thŏroughfăre: | héavĕn-róysterers, | ĭn gáy-găngs | ..."), and thus prepares for the contrast in the lift and strength of the following rising feet: "thĕy thróng; | thĕy glítter | ĭn márches".[1] The change beautifully reinforces the feeling of restless energy in the clouds, conveyed powerfully in the successive verbs.

Another important point is the fine distinctions in tone and feeling that the same device can give to different parts of the same sentence. In the second example, we have two outrides in the last sentence, but they produce subtly different effects. The first outride is a very rare one, taking in the beginning of a succeeding phrase: this gives a stronger emphasis to "dearest", and makes us pause an instant at the second "her", as though the mind is dwelling on what will follow, and the voice gathering itself to enunciate in a gentle tone the next phrase. The feeling of high regard, of tenderness and regret deepens at this point, but at the next outride, it changes slightly again. After the superbly placed "Man", the rhythm switches from falling to rising, which allows for a slightly faster tempo, and suggests the poet's intensifying regret, his incipient indignation; but at "firedint" the greater stress and pause sharpen the regret to a poignancy, and bring to the surface the pain and bitterness which the lines here had stirring in them. It is not a coincidence that at this point the hurried feet appear (prepared for by the increased tempo of the last line), conveying his fear, horror and indignation, and the wilful pressure of his feelings rising against his condition.

1. Note my earlier remarks on the capacity rocking feet have to merge into a falling or rising rhythm without seeming out of place, pp. 206-207.

Similar remarks can be made of the second stage of this poem, but I will only pause to point out the difference in mood between this phrase

nor mark
Is ány of him at áll so stárk

and this: A héart's-clarion. Awáy grief's gasping,! joyless days, ...

The hurried feet in these examples function in very similar ways, and this I think enables them to convey the same degree of feeling, but a small difference pinpoints a key moment of transition in the poem's development. In both instances the hurried feet suppress a stress (on "him" and "clarion") and so throw greater weight on the next stressed syllable. The combination of haste with a more emphatic accent and the pause which that demands reveals the degree to which the poet is distraught or caught up by joy and relief; but in the first example the rhythm has the last quick movement before the oppressive weight of "But vastness blurs and time! beats level", where the contrast between the tempo helps to convey that sense that the poet has descended as far as he can - all man's pettiness and mortality are brought into clear focus, but also our helpless indignation at what seems an injustice, a flaw in the very nature of things, an affront to our sense of ourselves. Yet within half a line the mood is completely and convincingly reversed. How has Hopkins done it? The secret lies I think in the distribution of stress, pause and hurried syllables. After the heavy dactyl of "béats lévěl" the rhythm reverts to a rising movement in the next foot ("Enough!"), a change which signals the new mood; then in the hurried syllables of "the Resurrection" the poet's fresh excitement begins to emerge. I would

read this phrase in the tone of a man who has half forgotten the Resurrection, but turns to it in relief, and finds himself profoundly more aware of its significance. Nevertheless, this is to my mind a bridge passage: the punctuation and position of "Resurrection" call for a pause at the end of the line, during which the significance of the last phrase sinks in; thereafter, the elation breaks through, and one can see this in the way the hurried foot decreases the stress on "clarion" (but not on "heart's") and throws a great rising stress on "Away"; the oppression and fear that had gathered in the previous six or seven lines is abruptly cast off, and in his joy the poet hastens to what this means: "Away grief's gasping, joyless days, dejection." From there, as I noted earlier, the poem moves through a brief stage of high exhilaration, with even a touch of scorn, towards a mood of assured, almost serene triumph in the final coda, where the rhythm steadies, and becomes less varied and halting.

This very fine poem reveals several important things about Hopkins's art. First, in spite of the strength of his feelings, he keeps a firm hand on them by a tight control of his rhythms: the preceding analysis revealed a complex but highly disciplined rhythmic order, and it is not too distant an analogy to speak of Hopkins as orchestrating his feelings. Second, even though we are aware of strong feelings ebbing and flowing through the poem, this does not mean Hopkins is unable to suggest small developments in feeling, or the subtle nuances that cluster at various points. And third, when these details of the poem's construction are seen in conjunction with the broad patterns set up by the extended counterpoint we noted before, what emerges is a rhythmic structure so carefully formed that it creates a detailed emotional arc or design - the heart's equivalent to the "plot" discussed earlier. In speaking or hearing the poem we are taken up in a small drama of time and eternity and our

humanity;[1] all our faculties are aroused and directed to a harmonised and satisfying end which resolves the poem's tension in a clear, serene vision.

Many of Hopkins's poems have this "arc", especially the sonnets, though I should add that even for Hopkins "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" is an exceptional poem in this respect. The characteristic shapes of the arcs, if we are to represent them pictorially, are, first, a beginning at a fairly high point and moving down before turning up again to a climax, as in "Heraclitean Fire"; or starting at a moderate pitch, developing to a climax and then moving to a quieter conclusion, as in "The Windhover"; or less often, Hopkins begins fairly quietly and develops his climax in the closing lines, as he does in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves." The shape of the emotional design of a poem is a helpful pointer to its overall effect, but there is another factor at work which particularly gives these poems a quality akin to drama, and that is their cathartic power.[2] Drama seems to me to have the greatest ability to achieve catharsis among the literary arts, mainly because it is the form which by its nature is able to draw from us the greatest degree of engagement and sympathy; properly directed, such engagement can lead to that very satisfying clear-sightedness and calm at the close. In a

1. I include in this man's spiritual nature. Quite how Hopkins suggests a realm which is so inaccessible and inarticulate it would be difficult to say, but my guess would be that he manages to include or suggest so much of what we are and what we feel and think about our experiences that the total complex is sufficient to point beyond itself to another dimension which we recognise normally speaking by the impact on other faculties.

2. Although Aristotle mentions only the catharsis of pity and fear, both the fact that he was speaking of tragedy, and our experience of catharsis in other literary genres, allows us to speak in a general way about catharsis. See On the Art of Poetry op. cit. pp. 38-39. and Chap. 14.

similar way, the degree of engagement Hopkins demands, as well as the way our thoughts and feelings are finely distinguished and directed within an overall pattern, result in a pleasurable release into clarity of mind and an inner stillness which seems characteristic of catharsis. This section can be concluded by pointing out how the concept of catharsis draws together the threads we have been following, giving the tensions generated by local counterpoint an important place in the emotional designs traced above, and underlining the degree of engagement the poems require.

Counterpointed syntax first appeared in the chapter on syntax, and the discussion there covered some of the results of a kind of syntactic interplay which I shall call complex counterpoint, and which occurs where we have two syntactic systems simultaneously at work in the same lines of verse; this is analogous to local rhythmic counterpoint, but is rare by comparison, and has very dissimilar effects. There is another kind of syntactic counterpoint, equivalent to extended rhythmic counterpoint, which occurs where the syntax of a poem changes, for example, in its characteristic structure, or mood, or dominant parts of speech, and consequently we have two or more sections of a poem syntactically differentiated. To distinguish this type from the other I shall call it simple counterpoint.

Simple counterpoint comes in many guises throughout Hopkins's work, but it should be sufficient here to comment on a few of the more interesting or important poems. It may be remembered that in the discussion of "God's Grandeur" a change in the rhythm and tone of the poem was noted at the beginning of the sestet;[1] a contributing factor

1. See pp. 310-311.

to this change, and a significant thing in its own right, is the change in syntax. The octave for the most part has simple declarative sentences, giving these eight lines a solemn tone, at times stern, at others moved, yet tightly controlled. In the sestet we have an immediate change; the opening line is inverted - the first in the poem - and three others occur in these lines:

> And though the last lights off the black West went
> Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs -
> Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
> World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.[1]

In addition we have the two exclamations, quite without warning, and the second in a place we were not likely to expect it to be. Thus, in short, like the rhythm the syntax has loosened itself from the grip of a particular (syntactic) pattern and we have in the sestet the language of a man speaking in a relieved, exhilarated tone; moreover, the change in the characteristic syntactic structure suggests a change in the way things are being perceived: thus "Oh, morning springs at the brown brink eastward" conveys a conventional sequence of perception, whereas "Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs -" suggests a mind looking more closely at what it sees; in addition it captures the idea that the morning and the brown brink, and the springing are all one thing; it is the mind which has separated them and now requires a special device to fuse them back into an entity. This is a fine contrast to the thought of the second quatrain, whose syntax suggests man's capacity to break down, mar, conceal, perhaps a direct consequence of his extraordinary ability

1. Poems, 31, p. 66. I have underlined the phrases normally coming after the verb.

to distinguish and dissect rather than to see all and see it whole. Thus the syntactical development in this poem traces a significant transformation in a person's way of thinking, seeing and feeling, something the extended rhythmic counterpoint also emphasizes and complements.

A similar approach is adopted in one of Hopkins's less successful poems, the curtal-sonnet "Peace". The opening six lines have a large proportion of fairly unusual sentences, one of which is manifestly a failure (ll.3-4):[1]

> When will you ever, Peace, wild wooddove, shy wings shut,
> Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?
> When, when, Peace, will you, Peace? I'll not play hypocrite
>
> To own my heart: I yield you do come sometimes; but
> That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace
> allows
> Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?[2]

The syntax used here at times effectively captures the poet's troubled mood - his anxious half-smiling pleading, the inexplicable contradictions he has to live with, the sense of being denied what he really needs to have (though some may find the unVictorian-like play on words in line 5 betrays a two-exuberant delight in the punning capacity of language which disturbs the mood). In the next section, as the poet works toward some kind of explanation or resolution which will ease his discontent and anxiety, the syntax becomes noticeably more conventional, until at the close we have a short, simple sentence, conveying both the

1. The phrase is meant to mean "To my own heart", but the pattern of the infinitive verb over-rides this meaning.

2. Poems, 51, p. 85.

quality and purpose of Peace as well as the quieter, more accepting attitude of the poet.

> O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu
> Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,
> That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when Peace here does
> house
> He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo,
> He comes to brood and sit.

A rather different technique is used in the delightful and poignant "Binsey Poplars".[1] This poem falls into two sections as well; the first is concerned primarily with the scene as it was before the trees were felled, revealing its freshness and vigour, and the tenderness of the poet's affection. The second stanza, twice the length of the first, begins with a general consideration of what men do to nature, and why they do it, slowly coming back to the scene by the river:

> Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
> Strokes of havoc unselve
> The sweet especial scene,
> Rural scene, a rural scene,
> Sweet especial rural scene.

However, in spite of the differences between the stanzas in this regard there appear to be few changes in the syntax; in both we find conventional and inverted sentences, anaphora, and variations in the length and complexity of the syntactic structures; these observations would seem to

1. Poems, 43, pp. 78-79.

be borne out by the tone of deep regret, approaching anger, that works throughout the entire poem. And yet we might feel that there is something very different about the "country" of the first stanza and that of the second; the one is strong and vigorously alive, yet gentle and delicate, while the other is fragile and vulnerable. This may largely be attributable to the diction and slight changes in tone and rhythm, but some at least is owing to a very unusual syntactic transformation. In the first stanza, out of a total of thirty-two nouns, verbs and adjectives there are eleven nouns, thirteen adjectives and seven verbs. There is nothing notable about these figures, except perhaps that the verse is clotted with adjectives; but what is significant is that of the adjectives nine are verbal. This means that sixteen words in the first stanza are either verbs or derived from verbs. The significance of this is not apparent until we examine the second stanza in the same way: in twice the number of lines there are fourteen verbs[1] and eighteen adjectives, of which only three are verbal, giving a total of seventeen verbs and verbal adjectives, one more than the first stanza. These relative proportions, concealed though they are in the verse, manifest two very different sides of nature: in the first stanza the impression is of strength, vigour and energetic life, created by the proportionately large number of verbs and verbal adjectives, since the latter, though cognates, take with them some of their energy, and the power to establish a state of being, or to do or alter something, which their verbs possess; thus many of the nouns in this stanza are receiving an injection of energy which invests them with life, growth, and motion. This is apparent in

1. Two infinitives, lines 13 and 17, not counted.

Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun, (1,2)

Of a fresh and following folded rank (1,4)

That dandled a sandalled
Shadow ... (11.6-7)

and On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding
bank (1.8)

In the second stanza, where Hopkins has turned to the slenderness of nature's being, and to the reasons behind the attitude which led to the felling, he reduces the number of his verbal adjectives considerably, and their absence suggest to us, perhaps unconsciously, nature's fragility, the ease with which she can be utterly ruined.

This is not all however. Of the eight verbs in the first stanza, only one auxiliary ("are", line three) refers to the felling of the trees; that aspect is left more to the past participles ("felled","not spared"), and these, together with the present tense of the verb "to be" suggest a state not a stage in an action. This is helpful in that it underlines the irrevocability of what has happened;[1] but for the remaining verbs, the picture is utterly different. Nature's creatures are the subjects of these; they act on one another in a creative, harmonious, self-contained process, always in the moment of being and becoming, and caught up into the air and earth, and sun and water. But in the second stanza, all nature now becomes the object of many of the verbs:

1. The past tenses of the other verbs are especially effective in this respect.

O if we but knew what we do
When we delve or hew –
Hack and rack the growing green!

* * *

Where we, even where we mean
To mend her we end her,
When we hew or delve:

These are strong verbs, with harsh onomatopoeic sounds in some cases, and phonetic structures that release air and energy in articulating them. The picture we have now is of a "country" made vulnerable by her nature; powerful and lovely in herself, she is rooted and passive, subjected to man's "thriftless reaving"[1] of her; within the whole of this "rich round world"[2] she is weak and fragile.[3] The syntax thus repeats in a remarkable way the rhyming of "quelled" with "felled" in the first stanza; both beautifully capture nature's paradoxical qualities of being simultaneously strong and yet infinitely frail.

The next example provides yet another contrast, and incidentally indicates the considerable variety of ways in which simple syntactic counterpoint can be deployed. In the earlier discussion of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" three stages were distinguished in the development of the poem's thought, each with its own characteristic rhythm. The poem has a similar syntactical pattern, but with an important difference, as will appear shortly. The first fifteen and a half

1. "Ribblesdale" Poems, 58, pp. 90-91. The thought of this poem provides an illuminating gloss on "Binsey Poplars".
2. ibid.
3. cf. the image of the helpless Andromeda in "Andromeda", Poems, 50, pp. 84-85.

lines[1] are dominated by what is well called "the riot of energetic verbs and verbals of the first movement of the poem - 'flaunt', 'chevy', 'throng', 'glitter', 'lace, lance, and pair', 'ropes, wrestles, beats', 'parches', 'staunches', 'starches' - all vividly catching the motion of nature's metamorphoses."[2] The picture we have, as Grennen goes on to point out, is of an all-encompassing and aimless cycle: "Pre-Christian nature is restive, incessant, end-less; it is a process, but a process without aim, and leads to nothing beyond itself - 'nature's bonfire burns on.'"[3] The next four and a half lines are rather unusual and need careful analysis. They begin with two imperative sentences, both with suppressed verbs ("[That is] Enough!"; "[Go] Away grief's gasping"), and these may set the overall tone for the section. Thus the verbs in the following lines may be taken as imperatives too:

> Flesh fade, and mortal trash
> Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:[4]

1. I have counted the half lines of the coda as full lines, though Hopkins would have in all probability worked out the proportions using half-lines (see Poems, p. 49, cf. CRWD, pp. 71,87). On my count the proportions of this sonnet are $15\frac{1}{2} + (4\frac{1}{2} + 4) = 15\frac{1}{2} + 8\frac{1}{2} = 24$, which are fairly close to the sonnet proper. On Hopkins's probable count, it may have worked out to something like $(14 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}) + ((\frac{1}{2} + 1 + \frac{1}{2} + 2) + (\frac{1}{2} + 2 + \frac{1}{2}))$; this is in terms of the syntactic organisation of the poem. The formal proportions might be $14 + (\frac{1}{2} + 2) + (\frac{1}{2} + 2) + (\frac{1}{2} + 2) + \frac{1}{2} = 14 + 2\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$.

2. Joseph E. Grennen, "Grammar as Thaumaturgy: Hopkins's 'Heraclitean Fire'." Renascence, Vol. 15, No. 4, Summer 1967, p. 208. Some of the ideas at this point are taken from him, or derived from his, though I disagree with some of his generalisations, and have made a more detailed analysis.

3. ibid.

4. Poems, 72, p. 105.

But they may equally be taken as subjunctives, or indeed, even as imperative-subjunctives - not in terms of grammar, since this mood technically does not exist of course, but in terms of the affective logic and meaning of the poem - an ambiguity which pinpoints a crucial struggle and development in the poet: he seems to be in time and eternity at once. Caught in time as he is, and having seen with agonising clarity time's utter and inexorable obliteration of all it holds, he speaks in the subjunctive mood, wishing or asking that his mortal nature might be consumed so that he can leave time's processes, time's griefs, and lie in peace before the miraculous transfiguration of the Resurrection. It is worth stressing the ironical turn the poem takes in this section: in lines fourteen to sixteen he has followed to the end the process of time's obliteration, and recoils from it in horror, turning to the Resurrection as the one thing which can raise him out of time, flesh as he is; and yet at once he submits himself to the worst that time can do. In

> Flesh fade, and mortal trash
> Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire leave but ash:

he condenses all the stages he must go through, death, then decay, and finally being consumed in the great destruction by fire at the end of time.[1] It is tempting to take these lines simply as a triumphant and half scornful dismissal of a man now free of a great fear, but what has preceded them in the poem, and the ambiguity of the grammatical moods, suggest the undercurrents of anxiety and struggle as the poet wishes for the consummation of time in his body in order that the consummation of

1. There is a world of difference pinpointed between this fire and nature's in "nature's bonfire" and "world's wildfire".

eternity might be fulfilled, which brings us to the significance of the imperative mood of the verbs. They simultaneously catch Hopkins speaking as it were from the perspective of eternity: knowing the physical reality of the Resurrection and the certainty of its approach, he has taken a step into eternity and speaks with the calm assurance of these imperatives; because it is always so in eternity, he can require it to be so in time, treating what is future as though it is now present.[1] We thus catch in these lines a moment when the poet is in two worlds, in time requiring of himself submission to time's processes, and glimpsing in eternity the release from time which this submission brings; it is both a struggle and a joy, a small Gethsemane and an Easter morning mingled.

The final section of the poem has an abrupt change in the syntax. All the verbs are present forms of the verb "to be", and they bring us fully into the realm of the eternal, where a future eternal state is caught in the instant of its creation, but treated also as already in existence, as it is in Christ - "I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, ...". (The tension this creates is powerfully evoked in the different meanings of "I am" in this sentence). The verbs here make it clear that the previous section was a kind of bridge passage, bringing the poet out of the consuming process of nature into the restoration of the Resurrection. In addition though, the verbs say a great deal about the nature of that restoration, especially in relation to the syntax we noted in the two other syntactically differentiated sections. Grennen again has some illuminating observations, this time in his discussion of "This .., immortal diamond/Is immortal diamond".

1. It is very significant that Hopkins uses tense and mood here and in the final section in much the same way that the Old Testament prophets used what is known as the prophetic past tense. In speaking of future events they used the past tense, since they were so certain to occur it was as though they had occurred already.

> Taken as the subject of the verb the phrase [immortal diamond] derives its meaning by a technique which Kenneth Burke has termed "qualitative progression" from the catalog of trivia (line 20) which it caps - an utterly worthless thing, therefore - while, as predicate, it reverts to its usual signification - a thing deathless, eternal, brilliant, and valuable. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the word "immortal", since it means "not mortal", can be taken to mean (in the first instance) "lifeless", "not even living", as well as (in the last instance) "not subject to death". (There may even be a false etymology at work here in "diamond", so that if taken as coming from a hypothetical Gr. dia-/-L. mundus its carbonaceous or "buried in the earth" aspect might be emphasised. ...) ... Rather than a mere iteration for emphasis the statement, "...immortal diamond/ Is immortal diamond," is a mirror of the total structure, a support and a climax to the meaning of the poem as a whole. In Christ's Resurrection the lifeless is given eternal life; autotelic process is given timeless significance; and the material universe of Heraclitus is invaded by Spirit.[1]

He goes on to conclude his article with these remarks:

> But there is a true transmutation (un-analysable, and therefore able to be represented by a word no more complicated than "is") in the phrase "immortal diamond", a transmutation which is symbolically equivalent to the transmutation which the Resurrection brings about in nature, as well as in man himself. The closer the poet gets to the heart of a real mystery, the less efficacious does discursive language become for him. Hopkins' final copulative verb is the linguistic equivalent of a miracle and a mystery, and it crystallises the meaning of a poem

1. op. cit. p. 209.

which requires for its full response not only knowledge and sensibility, but faith.[1]

This gives the syntax of the final coda a very high place, a place it deserves, but if this is so, then the syntax of the whole poem deserves the same praise, since the last lines only make any sense once we have come through the minutely constructed stages of the preceding twenty lines. Each leads to and defines the next, generating in the process some of the tensions mentioned earlier, until in the last coda the reader is brought to a point of resolution and supreme clarity of mind.

These twenty-four lines take us great distances in a short space, through the circling processes of nature into death, down the long perspectives of history and time, and through the end of time into eternity. It is achieved partly by what W. H. Gardner calls "syntactical magic" [2], but partly also by a rhythmical magic. Our analysis of the poem in terms of syntax and rhythm have revealed two ways in which the

1. cf. this from Hopkins's notes on Parmenides: "But indeed I have often felt when I have been in this mood and felt the depth of an instress or how fast the inscape holds a thing that nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple yes and is." JP. p. 127. Also this: "To be and to know or Being and thought are the same. The truth in thought is Being, stress, and each word is one way of acknowledging Being and each sentence by its copula is (or its equivalent) the utterance and assertion of it." ibid. p. 129. It is interesting to compare the use of the copula in "Heraclitean Fire" with that noted in the first stanza of "Binsey Poplars" (p. 343). For nature as for man the verb implies a state, but for nature in time a fixed state means death, the end of her living processes; for man in eternity it means eternal and abundant life. Note though the very different effect of the copula in describing man and nature's captivity in an endless state of process:

> Mán, how fást his fíredint, his mark on mind, is gone.
> Bóth are in an únfáthomable, áll is in an enórmous dárk
> Drowned,

2. Poems, p. xxx.

poem is organised; rhythmically the point of greatest intensity and tension is during the sestet and the first coda, and this is the stage of the deepest emotional turmoil. From there the rhythm steadies and develops a firm, graceful movement in the final coda, reflecting the calm and confidence the poet has found, the "heaven-haven" he wrote of twenty-four years before.[1] Syntactically, the point of greatest tension is in the second coda, where Hopkins is caught between time and eternity and the demands that both lay on him; significantly, while there is emotional tension in this section, it is more obviously the point where we feel the greatest pressure from mind and will, out of which struggle Hopkins emerges into the triumph of the last four lines. Thus, although the poem is organised in two different ways, these complement one another bringing the reader through a highly complex, subtle, and powerful experience. What is especially significant is the way the patterns move in different but complementary ways in the first twenty lines, but are resolved together in the final coda, doubly emphasizing the sweetness and peace of the Resurrection's total transformation. And finally, we must note that although the syntax and rhythm are the poetic "equivalents of a miracle and a mystery",[2] it is yet to come, a fact which draws our attention to the way in which the rhythm and syntax (and much else) lay bare the developments of the poet's thought, attitudes and tone in the here and now, especially in the last coda. In other words, we are aware of a voice slowly changing, in the end transformed. In the context of Hopkins's work as a whole, in the context of nineteenth century English literature, this poem is a remarkable achievement.

1. ibid., 9, p. 19.

2. Grennen, op. cit., p. 211.

If we look back over this analysis of rhythmic and syntactic counterpoint, one major conclusion presses itself upon us. These two kinds of counterpoint both mark and create significant developments or changes in direction in some of the poems, and close analysis may reveal this to be true of a large number of the remainder. They often go hand in hand and reinforce each other's efforts in the verse, although as we saw, they are sometimes used independently of one another. For our purposes the most important consequence of counterpoint is that it creates through its changes of thought and tone and rhythm a series of "voices" in the poems. In some cases this may quite literally be a character who is not the poet engaging him in a dialogue; "The Starlight Night" provides an excellent example of this obviously dramatic device:

> Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
> Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare! -
> Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
>
> Buy then! bid then! - What? - Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
> Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs![1]

In most cases though the new "character" speaking is a different side of the poet himself, emerging from what went before to develop or answer or resolve the tensions evolved in the poem. There are several ways in which this characteristic defines the dramatic nature of the poems: the suggestion of the voice "entangled in the words",[2] the prevailing feeling that the

1. Poems, 32, pp. 66-67. In the fourth line quoted here the dialogue is in full swing, but the abrupt change of tone in the preceding line may mark the first appearance of the quieter questioning voice.

2. Robert Frost, from A Way Out, quoted by Reuben A. Brower in The Fields of Light, O.U.P. New York, 1962, p. 19.

poems are, in Reuben Brower's words "dramatic in the sense of defining characters through the way they speak ...";[1] the presence of an affective and intellectual arc articulated by contrasting voices, and nearly always in three to five stages, much like the formal division of plays into acts. In terms of our general argument this is one of the most important points to emerge, and in itself it further defines what we are pursuing. First, the creation of a small lyric drama played out in the subtle modulations of the poet's voice is in a genre to which drama, music and much early (usually alliterative) literature belongs. Although the performers are speaking or playing to one another (except in the narratives of an oral literature), their whole performance and the art work itself are directed at a live audience, and rely on the audience for their significance and fulfilment; without that vital connection the art is a limp copy of what it was intended to be. In a similar way, Hopkins's poems live by both performance and an audience, although as I noted earlier, performer and audience are one and the same, both performing the poems, and imagining a "stage" for them into which he gazes as audience, listening and responding to them as small dramas, with a dramatic situation generated around them - a speaker or speakers, someone or something addressed, a physical setting, and so on. In a very few cases, as I noted earlier, the performer needs to <u>see</u> the poem in order to unravel the sense, but in these poems the sense of a dramatic structure in the verse and of the artificiality of any recitation of them paradoxically

1. Quoted by Tony Tanner in his Introduction to <u>Pride and Prejudice</u>, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 25, from "Light and Bright and Sparkling" in <u>The Fields of Light</u>, op. cit.

makes one conscious of how much they require a performance. If we feel that Hopkins's poems "bid" in this way, it is owing (amongst other things) to the interplay of various "voices" and the dramatic setting they form around themselves. We can illustrate this briefly by reference to The Wreck of the Deutschland. It opens with the tone and setting which permeates through much of the poem, the poet speaking to God with awe and love and dread; in the remaining stanzas of the first part, the various aspects of the poet's relationship with God which the first stanza summarises are developed separately - the terror and stress of God's holiness experienced one night at the altar (stanzas 2 and 3), the sustaining pressure of life and the Gospel from God in him, given as a gift for others (stanza 4), the wonder and love of God as Creator, vividly caught in the "stars and storms" and "dappled-with-damson west" (stanza 5), the theological though powerful explanation of what has happened in stanzas 2 to 5[1] (stanzas 6 to 8), and then the return of the tone of adoration and love of God as Lord, with prayers for Him to master man, to take up His sovereignty by means which are manifestations of both His frightful power and limitless mercy. These changes are small but significant creating a vivid sense of the dynamism, variety and growth in the poet's relationship with God, and not only that, but also the sense of a dialogue with an unseen and unheard Being who is yet closer than our heart-beats to us. It is this aspect in particular which makes the first part so powerful and fitting an introduction to the poem as a whole, since the action played out in the

1. It is also an explanation of the phrase "Lord of living and dead" in the first stanza.

relationship between the poet and a soyereign creator who is active and present in His creation to the point of becoming a creature in it is carried over into the frightful wrecking of a ship, with all the terror and confusion and purposelessness that surrounds events like these. In other words the personal testament enacted in the first part validates the interpretation of the events made in the second, though in the second part too, the dialogue continues, but with more characters, and a greater number of guises adopted by the poet. For example, death speaks in stanza 11, and the sister, in stanza 17, 19 and 24, while Hopkins speaks to her (stanza 35), to St. Francis (stanza 23), his own heart (stanza 18), to Christ (stanzas 30 to 34), to us (stanzas 11, 22, 25), and is by turns narrator, commentator, theologian, philosopher, worshipper. As I noted in Chapter 6, these different voices Hopkins speaks in, and the characters he speaks to from time to time, make this poem into a monodrama, and although Hopkins is the only speaker, paradoxically he is overshadowed frequently by a God of awesome love and power who is present everywhere but hidden behind "the world's splendour and wonder". This poem perhaps more than any Hopkins wrote fulfils the terms we have been analysing and defining, and comes to life in speaking or performing it with due regard to its dramatic characteristics.

The second way in which this "counterpoint of voices" distinguishes Hopkins's poetry has been hinted at already, and is what Geoffrey Hill, quoting Coleridge, calls the "drama of reason" in Hopkins.[1] Hill develops this at some length, but we can summarise his analysis: commenting on the falsity of a pamphlet by George Eliot, Address to Working Men by Felix Holt, he writes:

1. op. cit. p. 94.

> George Eliot has denied us the cross-rhythms and counter-pointings which ought, for the sake of proper strategy and of good faith, to be part of the structure of such writing. In short, she has excluded the antiphonal voice of the heckler.[1] (My emphases)

He goes on to elaborate the ways in which the drama of reason may require a mode of expression which is elliptical, awkward, subtle, and resistant to immediate comprehension. The necessity to convey the debate and conflict, and to penetrate to the truth, however complex and resistant to analysis it may be, inevitably forges such a style:

> The issue would seem to be between two forms of sacrifice: sacrifice of or sacrifice to. The first involves making a burnt offering of a powerful and decent desire, the desire to be immediately understood by "a common, well-educated, throughtful man, of ordinary talents". Its structure is a recognition and a resistance; it is parenthetical, antiphonal, it turns upon itself; ...[2]

Immediately after this passage Hill quotes an important section from one of Hopkins's letters to Bridges:

> Plainly if it is possible to express a sub/t/le and recondite thought on a subtle and recondite subject in a subtle and recondite way and with great felicity and perfection, in the end, something must be sacrificed, with so trying a task in the process, and this may be the being at once, nay perhaps even the being without explanation at all, intelligible.[3]

1. ibid.
2. ibid. p. 100.
3. LRB. pp. 265-266.

The "counterpointing" of different voices in Hopkins is one manifestation of the "drama of reason"; it enables Hopkins to convey the flow and recoil, the tensions, conflicts and changes that occurred in himself, in the people and natural world around him, in society; it gave to his poetry a living vigour and a vital connection to the deep-moving currents in humanity and his age.[1] It should be said that the other kinds of counterpoint we have examined - rhythmic and syntactic - are manifestations of the same quality, and nowhere more clearly than in complex syntactic counterpoint (exemplified in particular by the deeply significant grammatical ambiguity in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" discussed earlier in this chapter), where we are made to feel most acutely the strains between one way of thinking, feeling and perceiving, and another which is new, urgent and fresh.

1. This is another important point which Hill makes, ibid., p. 101: "It is the difference, essentially, between vital and inert structures".

CHAPTER 10

"Figures of Spoken Sound"[1]

> A budded lime against the field wall: turn, pose, and counterpoint in the twigs and buds - the form speaking.[2]

The "figures of sound" Hopkins had in mind when he used this phrase were divided, broadly speaking, into two kinds - rhythmical figures (involving pitch, quantity and stress), and figures "rhyming" in sound (alliteration and assonance).[3] The discussions in this chapter will of course be concerned with the latter in its many ramifications, taking in, over and above vowel- and consonant-rhyme, half-rhyme, full-rhyme (both within and at the end of lines) and stanzaic forms. The mention of stanzaic forms in this list may seem questionable, but it is important to emphasize that stanzaic forms are "figures of sound" writ large, something which the Deutschland stanza in particular brings out. The formal shape of the sonnet and the stanzas Hopkins used are determined largely by the sounds of the poem - most obviously by the rhyme scheme and the rhythm, but in addition by the number of lines, line length, and perhaps the caesura, which at times is a convention, but at other times an important part of the rhythmical design in some of Hopkins's poems - most notably in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire".[4] The first part of this chapter

1. JP., p. 267.
2. ibid., p. 163.
3. ibid., p. 268.
4. cf. "St. Winefred's Well"(Poems, 152, p. 187) and "Epithalamion" (ibid., 159, p. 199).

will deal with stanzaic forms, relating them to a number of issues, some raised earlier, others new, while in the second part I will go on to discuss the sound patterns within lines. In some respects these are more important, and so the discussion in the second part will be rather more detailed than the first.

I have already had occasion to draw attention to the extensive rhythmic and syntactic structures Hopkins creates in his poems and to the way these intensify the formal character of his art. Stanzaic forms are in rather obvious ways very much part of the same process of formalising the utterance, and of providing it with a discipline and shape. However, they achieve it in a rather different way: verse forms are, in one sense, more artificial than the structures discussed in earlier chapters, and yet they need not have the same effects of artificiality or formality on the poetry - or at least they make a smaller contribution than other devices, especially the complex patterns of vowel- and consonant-rhyme Hopkins used so much. This may be because we have grown so accustomed to verse forms that they seem a natural part of the poetic landscape. Nevertheless, poetic forms do have important effects in these and other areas, and they require some consideration.

It is curious that although Hopkins admired complex rhyme schemes - he was full of praise for the "musically interlaced" rhymes of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode",[1] and the appeal of the sonnet lay partly in the beauty (and difficulty) of its rhymes[2] - he only used one complex form throughout his career (apart from the sonnet), and that is the Deutschland stanza. For the most part, he used rhyme schemes such as

1. CRWD. pp. 148-149.

2. ibid. pp. 71-72, 85-87.

$aa_4b_3b_4$,[1] $abab_3$,[2] $aaba_4$,[3] $ababccc_3$,[4] or $abbaccc_4$,[5] with only small variations in line length, whereas the Deutschland stanza has a much more complex form - $a_{2/3}b_3a_4b_3c_5b_5c_4a_6$ - and contributes a great deal to the achievement of the poem; it has variety within a very powerfully unified form, and is capable of a wide range of tones and effects through enjambement and adjustment in the accentuation of the rhyme scheme. For Hopkins its appeal may have lain chiefly in the difficulty it presented; the discipline was what he needed to make his creative powers sparkle even as it controlled them. It is significant that of the forty-eight complete poems of the mature period, thirty-three are sonnets or sonnet derivatives and three are curtal-sonnets, if we count "(Ashboughs)", which is now being acknowledged as a major complete poem, even though it has a number of variants which Hopkins never cleared up.[6] Clearly most of his best work was done in very demanding verse forms, and this in itself says something about their importance in an evaluation of his work.

Broadly speaking, and seen in terms of the dramatic nature of these poems, verse forms have two main areas of interest to us. The first is

1. "The Loss of the Eurydice", Poems, 41, p. 72. I follow Ernst Häublein (The Stanza, London, Methuen and Co., 1978) in indicating the number of feet in a line with a small number just below the letter of the rhyme scheme. A number at the end of the rhyme scheme indicates that all lines have the same numbers of feet, and a number after a group indicates that all lines in the group have the same number of feet. p. 18.

2. "(On a Piece of Music)" ibid., 148, p. 184.

3. "At the Wedding March" ibid., 52, p. 86.

4. "Morning, Midday, and Evening Sacrifice". ibid, 49, p. 85.

5. "(Margaret Clitheroe)" ibid., 145, p. 181.

6. Walford Davies includes it in his edition of the poems, Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Poems, London, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1979.

in the way they give the thought of the poem or the stanza a formal shape, or arc - especially in the case of the sonnet - and the second is the way the individuality of each form communicates a significant part of a poem's meaning. The first point we need to look at in a little detail.

One of Hopkins's most abiding characteristics was his passion to unify, to gather up the threads of his experience, and faith and knowledge into closely-knit wholes. One can readily detect here the central pillars of the Hopkins aesthetic - variety within unity - but behind the aesthetics lie important religious and philosophical assumptions. Since for Hopkins the entire universe and all its ramifications were explicable in terms of one God who had become incarnate as a man, and given the fact that the universe had an awesome order and harmony, with greater wholes encompassing lesser ones, and each finding their ultimate significance in Christ, the concept of unity had great importance in all spheres of life, especially in morality and art. Interestingly enough, Hopkins had developed these ideas before his conversion, and Catholicism can only have strengthened a tendency already strong in him. In 1865, in an essay for Walter Pater, Hopkins wrote, "All thought is of course in a sense an effort in unity. This may be pursued analytically as in science or synthetically as in art or morality. In art it is essential to recognise and strive to realize on a more or less wide basis this unity in some shape or other."[1] Even at this early stage, the drive to find unity was very strong, perhaps mainly because Hopkins saw that unity did not mean only clarity but harmony too;

1. JP. p. 83

synthetic unity gives the work of art light and sweetness:

> In art we strive to realize not only unity, permanence of law, likeness, but also, with it, difference, variety, contrast: it is rhyme we like, not echo, and not unison but harmony.[1]

The terms Hopkins uses are interesting: they indicate that unity in art, or in morality, is more than merely significant; it is an ideal, a microcosm of the creation, and procures an absolute beauty for the work, which is a step "in a scale of infinite and inexhaustible excellence".[2] Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 3, a unified work of art generates a unique state of mind in the perceiver:[4]

> The mind has two kinds of energy, a transitional kind, when one thought or sensation follows another, ... (ii) an abiding kind for which I remember no name, in which the mind is absorbed (as far as that may be), taken up by, dwells upon, enjoys a single thought: we may call it contemplation, but it includes pleasures, supposing they, however turbid, do not require a transition to another term of another kind, for contemplation in its absoluteness is impossible unless in a trance and it is enough for the mind to repeat the same energy on the same matter.[5]

Hopkins goes on to observe that "Art exacts this energy of contemplation

1. ibid.
2. LRB., p. 231.
3. Here I go over again briefly some of the arguments advanced in Chapters 3 and 4, but they are placed in a different context.
4. JP., pp. 125-126.

but also the other one, ..."[1] Thus art requires and creates a heightened awareness, sharpness of mind, an intense interaction between perceiver and object in which the object is wholly grasped by the mind:

> The further in anything, as a work of art, the organisation is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter, the more effort will be required in apprehension, the more power of comparison, the more capacity for receiving that synthesis of (either successive or spatially distinct) impressions which gives us the unity with the prepossession conveyed by it.[2]

This is a valuable quotation, since it reveals Hopkins's understanding of the relation between "instress" and the unity of an object or work of art. As we saw earlier "prepossession" was the first term Hopkins used to describe what he later called instress, and it is evident from the phrases "the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter" that he conceived the work of art as a product of the vital interaction between some inner organizing power and the material of the work, which created an artefact both highly structured and completely integrated. He also seems to allow for different degrees of unity, but however strong the unity a work possesses, the important point is that for Hopkins unity revealed the presence of instress. I mentioned in Chapter 3 that by "instress" Hopkins sought to explain the qualities of "aliveness" and oneness in the natural world, and the application of "instress" and "inscape" to art meant that he expected these qualities to be embodied in art as far as art could do so. Thus, his stress on

1. ibid., p. 126.
2. ibid.

unity reflects his effort to give his art a three-dimensional order ("the deeper the form penetrates the matter") and a vitality which transforms the utterance into "living art".[1]

Another side to Hopkins's concern with unity is his interest in perfect forms. Again, he developed his ideas on this while still at Oxford. In discussing the concepts which a new Realism in philosophy would develop, he fixes on "type or species", and gives the illustration of the fixed positions in music for the roots of chords. He then adds:

> so also there are certain forms which have a great hold on the mind and are always reappearing and seem imperishable, such as the designs of Greek vases and lyres, the cone upon Indian shawls, the honeysuckle moulding, the fleur-de-lys, while every day we see designs both simple and elaborate which do not live and are at once forgotten; and some pictures we may long look at and never grasp or hold together, while the composition of others strikes the mind with a conception of unity which is never dislodged: and these things are inexplicable on the theory of pure chromatism or continuity - the forms have in some sense an absolute existence.[2]

Hopkins's Platonism is very strong here, but although it diminished under the Jesuit influence, the poet never lost his belief that certain forms have an absoluteness and a perfection which draw men back to them again and again. There are of course works of art which achieve a perfection of form that is unique and unrepeatable, and these are equally important to Hopkins - something we must enlarge on later. The idea that

1. This is one of Hopkins's characteristic phrases; see LRB. pp. 217, 246.

2. JP., "The Probable Future of Metaphysics", p. 120.

forms have an absolute existence was important to Hopkins in two ways. Firstly, for a Christian poet, the existence of ideal forms testifies to the existence in an absolute reality of a living idea, found in Christ. Just as the creation reveals some facets of the mind and activity of God, so perfect forms reveal a special kind of beauty and unity which reflect something of God's character. And secondly, ideal forms present the artist with a challenge to achieve perfection within the constraints of the form; we can see this in Hopkins's continuing experimentation with the sonnet, where he develops the many resources and beauties of the form so skilfully that he is rightly recognised as one of the finest and most original sonneteers in English.

For Hopkins these forms were not artificial, arbitrary, or preconceived, but natural, ideal, exactly suited to various kinds of expression, and having a perfection which answers any accusation that they constrain or distort the material of the poem. These kinds of complaints have often been made in the twentieth century, and Allen Ginsberg makes them forcefully:

> Trouble with conventional form (fixed line count and stanza forms) is, it's too symmetrical, geometrical, numbered and pre-fixed - unlike to my own mind which has no beginning and end, nor fixed measures of thought ... the mind must be trained, i.e. let loose, freed - to deal with itself as it actually is, and not impose on itself, or its poetic artifacts, an arbitrarily preconceived pattern (formal or subject)...[1]

1. Quoted by Häublein, op. cit., pp. 12-12, from The Poetics of the New American Poetry (Eds. D.M. Allen, & W. Tallman), New York, 1973, pp. 324-325.

Had Hopkins read this, he would have recognised immediately that the philosophies of continuity or "chromatism", and Historical Development which he opposed as an undergraduate[1] had grown to maturity, and he probably would have replied that Ginsberg has misunderstood both the nature of poetic forms and the world. Poetic forms are natural in the sense that they fulfil the conditions for beauty perceived in the created world; further, it could be argued that certain forms like the sonnet are not preconceived and prescriptive, but have been arrived at because they have a shape which the mind finds exactly apposite and natural to its own workings. It may be that by avoiding conventional poetic forms many modern poets have not achieved what they were consciously aiming at, namely of discovering "the truth hitherto unrecognizable of one's own sincerity, including the unavoidable beauty of doom, shame and embarrassment, that very area of self-recognition ...."[2] However, Hopkins may not have disagreed with the idea of organic form which Ginsberg is arguing for, but only with the form which it took. He would have found much modern poetry in free verse far too formless, loose and bulky - in his terms, not true poetry because it is not sufficiently distinguished from ordinary language by "heightening". His comments on Whitman are especially illuminating in this regard.[3] This usefully pinpoints his own conception of unity, which is fundamentally an Aristotelian one of a beginning, middle and end closely unified by a singleness of conception and execution; nothing which is extraneous to the material of the work must be allowed to intrude.[4] His espousal

1. JP., pp. 118-121.
2. Allen Ginsberg, Häublein, ibid.
3. LRB., pp. 155-158.
4. On the Art of Poetry, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, pp. 42-43.

of the sonnet form would strengthen this kind of thinking but it is very evident in his other poems: The Wreck of the Deutschland can be divided into three parts - Part the First, the bulk of the second part in which Hopkins deals with the wreck and the ruin, and the final four stanzas, which form a coda; "At the Wedding March", "Morning, Midday, and Evening Sacrifice", "Spring and Fall", and "Inversnaid" are all strongly marked with a sense of a defined and completed action or thought (some in three movements, where the unity is underlined by the symmetry). This idea of artistic unity is interesting in what it implies about Hopkins's understanding of the nature and purpose of art. The clarity and density of his poems, the sharpness of the demarcation between his art and life in general, suggest that, firstly, art has no need to follow the open-ended, diffuse and voluminous workings of the human mind left to itself - one of the things we appreciate in art is the art, the skill with which the material has been ordered; and secondly, poetry - at least poetry of the kind Hopkins wrote - asserts that it is a clarification of life, perhaps a small or a temporary one, but nevertheless a crystalline lens which concentrates and focuses our grasp of ourselves and our world by means of its difference from our normal ways of thinking, speaking and writing, and from the great mass of things we encounter in our daily lives. A propos of this, it is interesting to note that in a letter to Bridges, Hopkins mentions that he is determined to attach "prose arguments"[1] to his poems in view of their difficulty, which was a result of his desire "to express a subtle and recondite thought on a subtle and recondite subject in a subtle and recondite way and with great felicity and perfection ...."[2] He goes on:

1. LRB., p. 265.

2. ibid.

> Neither, in the same light, does it seem to be to me a real objection ... that the argument should be even longer than the piece; for the merit of the work may be for one thing in its terseness.[1]

Unlike T.S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens, who resisted any attempts to get them to say what they meant, Hopkins was disarmingly frank about what he meant.[2] It seems as though he was so confident in the poem as a work of art that he was sure no amount of explanation could take away anything from it: it was the poem - its art, its vitality, its form, and its meaning within their context - which mattered, and it was satisfyingly complete in itself not to be disturbed or limited in its meaning by explanations.

Although in Hopkins's case it is essential that the more metaphysical and aesthetic aspects of poetic forms be noted, it is equally important to be aware of their contribution to the craft of writing poetry. Hopkins was too much of an artist and a craftsman not to value them as aids to the making of a poem. Poetic forms are like conventions in other arts - the frames around paintings, the divisions into acts and scenes in drama, or into movements in musical works - and serve the same functions: they shape the art in question and define the kinds of responses required; and their impetus is to order the material of the poem and to unify it. When allied to the kinds of structures discussed in earlier chapters, they considerably increase the formality of the

1. ibid., p. 266.

2. cf."... we should explain things, plainly state them, clear them up, explain them; explanation - except personal - is always pure good; without explanation people go on misunderstanding; being once explained they thenceforward understand things; therefore always explain: but I have the passion for explanation and you have not." LRB., p. 275.

utterance but in themselves their influence in this regard is usually limited. However, in various ways they can intensify the formality of the structure, and for these I turn to Ernst Häublein's little book on the stanza referred to earlier.

In discussing stanzaic unity Häublein isolates three devices which heighten the unity - opening, closure, and framing - the last being of course a notable parallelism in opening and closure.[1] All these effects can be achieved in a wide variety of ways, so wide that it is not possible to be detailed about the consequences for the verse, but we can note a few. Opening can be accentuated by a short or a long line, a question, or an exclamation, an imperative, repetition of words, quotations, direct address to the reader, patterns of vowel- and consonant-rhyme, and internal rhyme.[2] A glance through Hopkins's poems shows he employs all these at one time or another, and the effect is always to give a striking opening to the stanza (and to the poem in cases of single-stanza poems), and thereby to define the stanzaic boundary clearly. Two good examples are the following:

> Nothing is so beautiful as Spring -
> When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;[3]

> Yes. Why do we all, seeing of a soldier, bless him? bless
> Our redcoats, our tars?[4]

1. op. cit., pp. 45-81.
2. The poets who used these devices most skilfully are of course the Metaphysical poets - notably Donne and Herbert - and many of Häublein's examples are taken from their work.
3. Poems, 33, p. 67.
4. ibid., 63, p. 99.

The same happens in reverse for stanzaic closure, and the same devices can be used, though in addition there can be a rhythmic change, a significant rhyme (closing couplet for example), or a sudden climax or summary. It must be stressed that closure is a more significant factor in unifying a stanza than opening; the demarcation of a stanzaic boundary at the end inevitably gives the stanza a greater closural emphasis and completeness. The questions posed, the problems raised, have an air of being dealt with, even if only temporarily. The following are a few examples:

> It is the blight man was born for,
> It is Margaret you mourn for.[1]

This poem uses double or triple alliteration in each line throughout, but the double alliteration here has a nearly exact parallelism in position and syntax; furthermore the poem uses masculine rhymes for the most part, but closes with a beautiful feminine rhyme which ties birth and death together into a single thought quietly and gently closing the poem. The poem the following lines come from, "Brothers", uses couplets and the occasional triplet, but here at the end Hopkins breaks the patterns by introducing an unrhymed line and then repeating a rhymed line. The repetition and the rhyme both emphasize the important conclusion the poet has reached and summarize the whole course of the poem:

> Ah Nature, framed in fault,
> There's comfort then, there's salt;
> Nature, bad, base, and blind,
> Dearly thou canst be kind;

1. ibid., 55, p. 88.

There dearly thén, deárly,
Dearly thou canst be kind.[1]

In the next example, the closural effect is achieved with a rather different device:

only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc únselve
The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.[2]

Here the last three lines are a lament; the tender repetitions and circling thought remind one of the way those who are deeply grieving repeat a name or a phrase over and over again, but in addition the repeated words and summary of the last line give the poem an emphasis and finality at this point by drawing together various threads (earlier rhymes are picked up from lines 11, 16 and 19, a similar repetition is echoed from line 3 of stanza one), and fixing the mind on the unspoiled beauty of the scene as it was described in the first stanza. The conclusion thus mingles a quiet grief with a deep delight in a delicate diminuendo, a tender and satisfying ravelling up of the thought and passions aroused in the poem.

Stanzaic framing is the most powerful of the unifying devices, and consists in a marked parallelism at the beginning and end of the stanza. Again this can be accomplished in any number of ways - envelope rhyme, syntactic and rhythmic repetitions, long or short lines, and the other

1. ibid., 54, p. 87.
2. ibid., 43, p. 78.

devices mentioned earlier. The way in which framing knits a stanza together is fairly evident, and we can turn without delay to Hopkins. Significantly, he only uses stanzaic framing in rhyme on two occasions, and it may be that these are the only instances of an intended stanzaic frame. One is the Deutschland stanza, and the other is the stanza of the slight "At the Wedding March"[1] ($aaba_4$). The Deutschland stanza is especially interesting, not merely because it is the vehicle of a great poem, but simply as a stanzaic form. It has both closure (a closing Alexandrine, longer than any other line in the poem) and framing (the same rhyme at the opening and close of the stanza). The weighty Alexandrine provides Hopkins with a means of concluding or summarising with considerable emphasis, while the rhyme frame fuses the stanza's sense together; the same rhyme occurs in the third line, which further emphasizes the stanza's unity. In addition though, the rhymes of the stanza are so interlaced that the first group (abab) is enmeshed with a second (bcbc), in which the b rhyme becomes the equivalent of the a rhyme in the first group, thereby knitting together the poem's thought very closely. Finally the a rhyme reappears. The impression is one of both forward progression and a circling back, which fuses the stanza into an extraordinarily close unit, yet with a corresponding degree of variety, flexibility and impetus. For example, the rhyme frame throws up the difference between the short opening line and the long closing one; indeed, there is a fixed counterpoint between the rhyme scheme and the line lengths which helps to generate a greater sense of "law" in the stanza with an equally strong impression of variety. Sprung rhythm further increases the variety with its varying number of

1. Poems, 52, p. 86.

syllables, and positional changes in the stresses.

Another point to consider is the way in which Hopkins freely varies end-stopped with run-on lines. Roger Fowler has pointed out that there is a scale from fully end-stopped lines to fully enjambed ones, the degree of pause at the end of the line determining significant rhythmic changes.[1] A further consequence of this kind of variation is that stanzaic boundaries are emphasized with end-stopped lines, but concealed by enjambement: where a pause follows a word at the end of a line, its rhyme is accentuated, and the rhyme frame is brought forward, whereas end-words not dwelt on because of enjambement are given much less weight and the rhyme frame recedes. If we examine The Wreck of the Deutschland in this light, some interesting points emerge. Of the poem's 280 lines, 77 are run-on, and the remainder end-stopped in one way or another. One can distinguish three degrees of end-stopping: the first is periods - full stops, exclamation marks, and question marks; the second is semi-colons and colons; and the third is commas and dashes.[2] The Deutschland has fifty-nine periods, fifty colons and semi-colons, and eighty-four commas and dashes. These proportions must be treated cautiously, but in a clear way they reveal that the Deutschland is more strongly end-stopped than weakly end-stopped, and has far less enjambement than end-stopping. Perhaps the most important thing though is that only twice does Hopkins run-on from one stanza to another (stanzas 7 to 8, and 32 to 33), once with a comma and once with a semi-colon. Thus generally the Deutschland's stanzas have well-defined boundaries, largely preserving line integrity, and almost entirely preserving stanzaic

1. "Prose Rhythm and Metre", op. cit., pp. 87-90.

2. These are very rough categorizations, since the sense may often alter the strength of the pause, but they are useful insofar as they provide an approximate guide to the degree of line and stanzaic integrity.

integrity. This gives the poem its peculiar quality of many discrete and richly meaningful units tied very powerfully together by the impetus of the poem's themes and passions, by the strictness with which stanzaic and rhythmic laws are observed, and also by two kinds of linking, what Häublein calls ex posteriori and a priori.[1] He develops a fairly complex technique for describing the kinds of linking used by poets,[2] but these are not essential to our purpose. Ex posteriori linking between stanzas takes place when in retrospect we perceive that a stanza logically follows another, although by itself the preceding stanza gave no indication of what was to follow. A priori occurs when a stanza gives the expectation that there is more to follow in the next stanza on issues already raised or merely pointed to. The two types of linking have rather different effects on the reader's grasp of the poem. The latter gives a strong forward movement suited to narrative or logical argument, while the former leads to moments of consideration, when ideas and words are being sifted through for connections and deeper meanings. These pauses may frequently be followed by a sudden moment of clarification and a deep grasp of the inner logic of the poem, a moment which instantly ravels up into a whole all the stanzas tied together in this way. There are clear and illuminating parallels with Hopkins's syntactical practices, in which meaning is delayed until everything essential to the whole sense is available; then the shock and pleasure of understanding give a penetrating freshness to the meaning the poem offers. Thus both kinds of linking unify, but they do so in different ways, have a different type of unity, and are suited to different modes of thought.

1. op. cit., passim.
2. ibid., pp. 84-85, 94, 96, 98, 100-101, 109-114.

Hopkins uses both kinds of linking extensively in the Deutschland, and it is significant that he also uses them in the volta of his sonnets.[1] Both also vary in strength, and this can be seen in the following examples, the first of which has weak a priori linking, and the second strong:

... and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;[2]

Not out of his bliss
Springs the stress felt
* * *
But it rides time like riding a river
(And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss).

It dates from day
Of his going in Galilee;
* * *
What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at bay,

Is out with it! Oh,
We lash with the best or worst
Word last![3]

1. As examples of a priori and ex posteriori respectively, consider a) "Tom's Garland", "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", and b) "God's Grandeur", "The Windhover".

2. Poems, 28, pp. 51-52, stanzas 1 to 2.

3. Ibid., 28, pp. 53-54, stanzas 6 to 8.

The next two examples illustrate ex posteriori linking, and again there is a variation in the strength of the device.

Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,
A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

Ah, touched in your bower of bone,
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
Have you!
* * *
What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?[1]

Now burn, new born to the world,
Double-natured name,
* * *
A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire hard-hurled.

Dame, at our door
Drowned, and among our shoals,
Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the reward:
Our King back, Oh, upon English souls!
Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cresseted east,
More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls,
Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.[2]

In view of Hopkins's preference for strongly-marked stanzaic boundaries, and given that stanzaic practice in the Romantic and

1. ibid., p. 57, stanzas 17 to 18.

2. ibid., pp. 62-63, stanzas 34 to 35.

Victorian periods tended in the opposite direction,[1] we need to ask what effect his preference has on the way the poems' meanings are perceived, and on the poems considered as dramatic pieces. As far as Hopkins himself was concerned, the creation of a highly-structured and consistently adhered to form had important and essential consequences. First, it emphasized the unity of the work by heightening (paradoxically) its parts:

> The more intellectual, less physical, the spell of contemplation the more complex must be the object, the more close and elaborate must be the comparison the mind has to keep making between the whole and the parts, the parts and the whole. For this reference or comparison is what the sense of unity means; mere sense that such a thing is one and not two has no interest except accidentally.[2]

A consistent form thus enhances the mind's continual comparisons between the whole and its parts, and an elaborate interplay emerges between the stanzas; in turn, and most importantly, the intensified sense of both unity and variety demands, creates that "energy of contemplation" referred to earlier, which I identified with the "stem of stress" carrying the

1. Häublein calls a priori linkage strong-stimulus linkage, and points out how it submerges stanzas into a verse paragraph if strong (as in run-on stanzas), and notes that extended a priori linking became commonly used in the nineteenth century. "Although they are rarely as long as the ones quoted above [In Memoriam, Section 86], strong-stimuli occur in all periods of poetry. However, poets before 1800 seem to have been reluctant to employ them extensively. Since later poets tend to disregard the concept of stanzaic unity, strong-stimulus techniques prevail in Romantic, Victorian and modern poetry." op. cit., pp. 109-111, p.111. It is interesting to find in a Jesuit poet so clear an adherence to medieval and renaissance principles of versification.

2. JP., p. 126.

mind over to the object being studied.[1] The quotation suggests one component of the stem - the amount of energy exerted by the mind: the greater this is, the closer and deeper is the contact between mind and work. For Hopkins therefore, a strict form is one of the more important ways of generating, in a very high degree, this energy of contemplation, and thereby forging the vibrant, close contact between the reader and poem. It can be argued with considerable justification that this is one of the central tendencies of Hopkins's art. In every way he strives to intensify the variety and the unity of his poems and in doing so to generate that tension between parts and between parts and whole which gives the multitude of relations in a poem an especially rich significance and resonance. The intense contemplative gaze such a work creates in the reader also leads to the heightened perceptiveness, clarity of mind and pleasurable tranquillity at the close which are the peculiar rewards of art. In this context, it is worth mentioning again that since Hopkins's poems are "made to be performed" the stanzaic unit is a unit in sound, and apart from the significance this has in terms of the way the poem communicates its meaning, it also means that in speaking them, the words are invested with a physical energy which is also a part of the "stem of stress" between poem and reader, or between speaker and audience.[2]

The strictness with which Hopkins observes stanzaic integrity has the same effect on the poems that the devices of alliteration, assonance,

1. See p. 80.

2. There are close and significant parallels here with music in terms of the parts or sections of a musical work, where each part is discrete, but is perceived in time and in relation to the whole structure, and in terms of the performance of a musical work, which makes an enormous contribution to the impact of a work on an audience - their grasp of its meaning - and the pleasure they receive.

and various types of rhyme have, namely of giving the poems a degree of formality which calls attention to itself and defines the relationship between poem and reader in fairly artificial and formal tones. However, the degree of formality can be varied, and it is important to take note of a remark Hopkins makes in the same notes from which the last quotation was taken:

> It is however true that in the successive arts with their greater complexity and length the whole's unity retires, is less important, serves rather for the framework of that of the parts.[1]

Most people would agree that it is not the stanzaic frame which impresses about Hopkins's poetry, but the internal patterning, in which case the poet is following his own perceptions. Nevertheless, on a rough count, the tendency to lessen the prominence of the frame is something that developed later. Apart from the domination of The Wreck of the Deutschland by the end-stopped line, the early poems reveal a similar pattern: the first five sonnets[2] after the Deutschland have a proportion of eighteen run-on lines to fifty-two end-stopped ones, whereas the last five sonnets[3] have a proportion of thirty-five to forty-five. Significantly, the four experimental sonnets - "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "Tom's Garland", "Harry Ploughman", and "Heraclitean Fire" - alter the balance considerably, having a proportion of thirty-one run-on lines to thirty-six end-stopped, and these poems are far and away the most "artificial" Hopkins wrote.

1. JP., p. 126
2. "God's Grandeur", "The Starlight Night", "Spring", "In the Valley of the Elwy", "The Sea and the Skylark".
3. "Heraclitean Fire", "In Honour of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez", "'Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend", "The shepherd's brow", "To R.B."

Our conclusion must be that form does not play as significant a part in creating the formal relation between poem and reader as do the structures discussed in earlier chapters, or as do the intricate sound-patterns discussed in the next part of this chapter; further, although Hopkins followed a conservative, Renaissance-like stanzaic practice, his poems are rarely as strongly end-stopped as the poetry of the Elizabethans or the Augustans - Sidney, the Shakespeare of the sonnets, and Pope for example - and consequently they have a less prominent stanzaic frame.

The final point to be made in this section concerns the individuality of the poems, and particularly of the sonnets. James Milroy has pointed out how richly varied and complex Hopkins's handling of a river poem ("Inversnaid") is compared to Tennyson's in "The Brook"[1] (leaving aside the greater density of texture), and it is generally true that Hopkins manages an extraordinary degree of variety within forms ostensibly the same. Something of this can be seen if one compares the last lines of all the Deutschland stanzas, but it is most clearly apparent in Hopkins's sonnets. W.H. Gardner lists several types with variants,[2] but his classification does not reveal the full extent of the individualisation Hopkins has achieved. He thought the sonnet to be a near perfect form,[3] and it may seem strange that he took such liberties with it, excepting his arguments that in absolute terms the English sonnet is smaller than the Italian form and needs filling out.[4] The

1. op. cit., pp. 127-129.

2. Vol. 1, Chap. 3.

3. "Now if the Italian sonnet is one of the most successful forms of composition known, as it is reckoned to be, its proportions, inward and outward, must be pretty near perfection." CRWD., pp. 85-86.

4. ibid., pp. 86-87.

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4. ibid., pp. 86-87.

reason behind the variety can be found once again in those important early notes:

> The further in anything, as a work of art, the organisation is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter ...[1]

The important idea here is that the "form", or prepossession, or instress "flushes" the matter; the inner, individualized spirit and energy of the poet's conception of what he is describing takes hold of the words, the rhythms, the forms and shapes them from within according to its own nature, working against the resistance of the language and the form. The result is a poem obeying the laws of its type, but distinguished sharply from all other poems. There are several factors in this - diction, syntax, rhythm, sometimes even subject matter - but it is the special advantage and beauty of sprung rhythm to be infinitely varied, which gives it its capacity to individualize, to render a poem unique at both surface and deeper, musical levels. Hopkins combines his rhythms with many other devices in his efforts to capture the "especial scene", and he very often ends by creating an elaborate, unique form or "inscape" which, as Hopkins said of something else, "speaks".[2] The point is clearer if we compare for a moment "The Windhover" with "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", and with "Harry Ploughman". All three are sonnets, in some respects rather strict sonnets, yet each is beautifully individuated, and the form of each poem "speaks" a vital part of the meaning: the excited, stressy, shifting rhythms of "The Windhover",

1. JP., p. 126.

2. See the epigraph to this chapter.

the long, weighty lines and sombre tones of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", the knotted tension and relaxing in "Harry Ploughman", and the swing of the rhythms, the burden lines - all these affect the form profoundly, making each poem utterly unique, and its individual form or "inscape" communicates the particular character, meaning and "instress" of the poem as a tangible, physical icon or image.

In some obvious respects, vowel- and consonant-rhyme[1] provide the strongest justification for Hopkins's insistence that his poems be read aloud, and also the best evidence for the argument that the poems have a dramatic basis. The consistent use of sound-relations to suggest or reinforce meaning in Hopkins's poetry underlines the fact that it is designed to be uttered aloud, with full emphasis on the consonants and vowels to draw out the patterns in sound and meaning. Some illustration of this aspect of what Hopkins called "lettering of syllables"[2] will be helpful, and the first stanza of "Binsey Poplars" provides some good examples:

1. These two terms, though less elegant than alliteration, assonance and skothending (half-rhyme), are more precise in conjunction with terms like "initial" and "medial", and I will use them more often.

2. JP., pp. 283-284.

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank.[1]

This part of the poem is concerned, though it may not appear so at first, with nature's paradoxical qualities of multitudinous variety and uniqueness on every hand, and her ultimate harmony and unity. The former qualities are conveyed by the presence of a new image or metaphor in each line, and by the way the dominant elements in the scene - trees, leaves, sun, shadows, wind and river - are invested with a particularity by means of the very different associations the verbs and adjectives draw into the poem. For example, the power and agility of both trees and sun suggested by "Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun" are very different from the playful vigour of "dandled a sandalled / Shadow", and this in turn is different from the slow, sliding meandering of the wind-touched river. In this case the vowel- and consonant-rhymes sharpen up the individuations we have noted through the different sounds that cluster at various points - the hard "c" and "q" across lines 1 and 2, followed by the repeated "lea-" sound, and then the heavily alliterated "f", and so on. Yet paradoxically these alliterative and assonantal chimes also serve to knit the scene into a harmonious whole. The clustering of similar sounds (a Hopkins characteristic) creates in small the necessary kind of intermingling and accumulation

1. Poems, 43, p. 78.

of meaning in phrases like "Quelled or quenched" and "in leaves the leaping sun". In the former instance "quelled" lends to "quenched" something of its power and its meaning of "to suppress", while in the opposite direction "quenched" gives to "quelled" some of its connotations of extinguishing or putting out. In the latter the consonant- and vowel- rhyme fuse the leaves and sun into a single inscape of matter, energy and motion. Perhaps the most remarkable example of sound linking occurs in these lines, where "s" and "a" dominate, forging close and evocative links between the aural images of the words and the visual ones they create in our minds:

That dandled a sandalled

Shadow that swam or sank

The harmony between the different "behaviours" of the shadows and the trees is reinforced in the same manner, though in this instance the syntactic parallelism considerably strengthens the peaceful concord of the scene.

These suggestions of many small inter-relationships are unified by patterns which form in words at some distance from each other. Thus the "a" sound of "aspens" is heard again in "rank", and then again seven times in the lines quoted above, and finally in "bank". Similarly the "e" of "quelled" (hinted at in "aspens") is echoed in "quenched", "felled", "fresh" and "meadow"; and "d" recurs across the stanza in "dear", "folded", "dandled", "sandalled", "shadow", "meadow", "wind-wandering" and "weed-winding". Where there is full rhyme, the knitting together of the thought is very strong, though as I noted in the chapter on counterpoint, the rhyme of "quelled" with "felled" is a

fine example of what we might call ironic rhyme.[1] The overall effect of these chimes is that each sets up a chain of associations across the verse, and in turn each chain is related to others, creating a finely worked, interwoven web of verbal, and hence thought patterns, in which the images and ideas, even those individualised most clearly, are also closely related to one another. We are compelled to hear and to feel the harmonizing unity, which does not overshadow nature's variety, but rather emphasizes the specialness of each "sweet especial scene".

Used in this way, language takes on unusual qualities. There is first of all the sensuous delight in sounds and sound-patterns, almost for their own sake, but as much for the appositeness of the sounds to the meaning. In the last three lines of the stanza we have been looking at, the "s", "m" and "w" sounds are soft, quiet, and match phonetically the gentle harmony of the scene they help to describe. And secondly, because sounds are brought into such prominence at a number of places in the poem, the entire sound-structure becomes significant: words are valued for the particular shape and timbre of their sounds, and since the reader is invited to discover for himself the relation between a word's meaning and its sound, he develops the closest contact with the poem. In this way words are enlarged: their individual characters and significations are strengthened - they become things in themselves as well as agents of meaning[2] - and the fabric of a poem becomes charged

1. See p. 344.

2. This is an obvious point, often made, but Walford Davies makes interesting use of it: "Words in Hopkins 'become things' in a special sense. What they most fully become is themselves. It is not so much that the poetry closes the gap between words and the things they denote as that it opens the connections between words and other words. A feeling as strong as Hopkins's of the nearly autonomous life of words compounds and reconstitutes, rather than mimes reality." And a little further on: "It is not that the referent is slighted; quite the opposite - it is given a

and resonant with significance. Considered from another point of view what Hopkins is doing is to generate as intensely as possible through the sound of a word those elements discussed in Chapter 3, the mental image (if one is associated with the word, though Hopkins is likely to create one if it is absent) and the conceptual abstraction. It is worth requoting the relevant passage:

> For the word is the expression, uttering of the idea in the mind. That idea itself has its two terms, the image (of sight or sound or scapes of the other senses), which is in fact physical and a refined energy* accenting the nerves, a word to oneself, an inchoate word, and secondly the conception.[1]

As we saw in Chapter 3, Hopkins felt that every aspect of a word - its sound, image, conception and "prepossession" or instress - bore a significant relation to what it denotes, and these are vital and evocative links between a poet and his reader: consequently, Hopkins brought to his poetry a mind that appreciated words as comprehensively as possible, and sought thereby to make the experience of words themselves and the meanings they conveyed as full as possible. It is significant that in

> new order of attention in being part of a complex moment of perception, made possible not by the world but by language-and-world." Davies then gives some illustrations of the way Hopkins extends his poetry past mimetic effects into an onomatopoetic and philological world in which language has an imaginative power far in excess of other kinds of poetry: "The words in the poems solidly face one another (often across many pages) as well as vertiginously facing the world. They dramatise moral reconciliations more importantly than they do realistic reproductions. Hopkins himself said that it is rhyme we admire, not echo." (JP., p. 83) Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Poems, London, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1979, pp. 45, 46, 47.

1. JP., p. 125.

the footnote to the passage quoted above (referring to the phrase marked with an asterisk), Hopkins writes "That is when deliberately formed or when a thought is recalled, for when produced by sensation from without or when as in dreams etc. it presents itself unbidden it comes from the involuntary working of nature",[1] which suggests that when the word is dwelt on, with all its characteristics savoured and allowed to have their full impact on our minds and senses, the meaning, and associated images, spring into the mind more sharply and intensely, thereby concentrating meaning - especially when a word is embedded in a rich network of relations with other words. In the light of these arguments Hopkins's insistence that his poems be read aloud takes on greater significance: more than being the necessary condition for an appreciation of the beauty and the relationships we have mentioned here, utterance of the poem is the experience or "epiphany" which carries all that the poem is alive into the mind and heart of a reader. If the word "utters" the idea, then the words of a poem utter a shaped and fused complex of ideas made the more vivid and resonant through the sound patterns linking each word to several others; in such an intricate network a word becomes an expanding centre of meaning as each link is formed. In this context, it is interesting to observe that Hopkins composed his poems orally rather than on paper: "... though indeed such verse as I do compose is oral, made away from paper, and I put it down with repugnance."[2] A Hopkins poem is therefore the performance of it, and the performance a realisation of the poem's inscape which carries

1. ibid.

2. FL., p. 379. (cf. CRWD., p. 42) This may not be entirely true; many of the poems may have been composed in this way, but the MSS reveal many reworkings on paper. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the poems were conceived orally, and the corrections made on paper have the same basis.

the poem's meaning and "instress" directly from the poet to his readers or hearers. W.H. Gardner provides a useful gloss on this idea in his Introduction to the Penguin edition of the poems:

> But instress is not only the unifying force in the object; it connotes also that impulse from the 'inscape' which acts on the senses and, through them, actualizes the inscape in the mind of the beholder (or rather 'perceiver', for inscape may be perceived through all the senses at once). Instress, then, is often the sensation of inscape - a quasi-mystical illumination, a sudden perception of that deeper pattern, order, and unity which gives meaning to external forms.[1]

In the case of language, we have a more complex process, since the words of a poem convey not only the unique instress of a highly ordered piece of language as language, but also the instress of what it describes, since, as has been noted in a number of places, the form and instress of a word is in a significant relation (which can be dependent or derivative) to what it denotes, and is therefore able to convey or recreate in the hearer the individual form and timbre of an object in the world, or an experience, a feeling, an idea. Without this sense that Hopkins's language has a real purchase on both inward and outward things, apart from its own coherence and harmony, we would find the elaborate patterns of sound a distraction rather than a highly effective way of creating or enhancing meaning - which is not to say that Hopkins does not at times fail, and this most often happens when the sound patterns dominate and pull loose from the sense: commenting on the

1. Harmondsworth, 1963, p. xxi.

line "Or to-fro tender trambeams truckle at the eye" ("The Candle Indoors"[1]), Denis Donoghue writes "Alliteration forces on line 4 a degree of emphasis, of significance, which the simple meaning of the words cannot sustain: the attention which the line compels is left frustrated."[2] The line conveys well the dancing delicate lights at the eye when we half-close them or blink, mainly by means of the light "t" sounds, but there is some justification for Donoghue's complaint. On the other hand, when the method succeeds, it succeeds extraordinarily well, as in these lines:

It dates from day
Of his going in Galilee;
Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
Manger, maiden's knee;[3]

Line 3 here, as Donoghue points out, is especially noteworthy:

> "Warm" and "womb" through initial and final alliteration insist on coming together though syntactically unrelated: initial alliteration and vowel-identity relate "grave" to "grey": a minor relationship is established by simple alliteration between "laid" and "life". The effect of these relationships in a single line (where the basic syntax is complicated by sound-factors) is to suggest with tremendous force the mystery of Christ's adherence to the living death of a bodily existence. The complex idea is arrived at by making a knot of the simple ideas, "warm womb" and "grey grave".[4]

1. Poems, 46, p. 81.
2. "Technique in Hopkins", Studies (Dublin), Vol. 44, 1955, p. 449.
3. Poems, 28, p. 53, stanza 7.
4. op. cit., p. 449.

The last illustration introduces us to the next point, the Welsh influence on Hopkins, since it epitomizes the alliterative and assonontal patterns which the poet learnt from Welsh poetry. Important work has been done on this aspect of Hopkins's poetry,[1] and I will try to develop my arguments from it rather than go over the same ground again.

An article like Miss Lilly's is illuminating in several ways; at the very least it explains some of the oddities of syntax and diction in Hopkins's verse, developed partly as a result of his adoption of Welsh models:

> But not only is Welsh verse unsurpassed, as Hopkins noted, in beauty of sound; the technical demands made on the poet have obliged him to neglect no detail of his work, to refine and polish it in an effort to attain a consummate perfection of expression; and they have encouraged him to eliminate colourless and unnecessary words, and so to cultivate the epigrammatic concentration which is a feature of so much Welsh poetry. The requirements of cynghanedd have often had a salutary effect on the poet's vocabulary, preventing him from being too conservative in his choice of words, and stimulating him to coin new words of his own.[2]

Miss Lilly goes on to explain how the sound patterns foster a dense style

1. For example, Gweneth Lilly, "The Welsh Influence in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins", Modern Language Review, Vol. 38, No. 3, 1943, pp. 192-205; W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Vol. 2, Chap. 3; Robert O. Bowen, "Hopkins and Welsh Prosody". Renascence, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1955, pp. 71-74. This last article is rather poor and ignores the very convincing arguments of Miss Lilly's article. N.H. Mackenzie (A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins) mentions the work of Christoph Küper, Walisische Traditionen in der Dichtung von G.M. Hopkins, Bonn, 1973, as the best work on this aspect of Hopkins.

2. op. cit., p. 192.

dominated by the noun and adjectival phrase, the compound word, interruption of a sentence or word, and so on. More important though is the way the Welsh models explain how Hopkins's poetry is intended to convey its meaning. In both cases, the poetry is dramatic and declamatory, relying on tone to unravel the sense,[1] and the sound patterns have a remarkable brevity and richness of expression in the fusion imposed by the principle of rhyme.[2] But in terms of the general argument being followed, the significance of the Welsh influence lies elsewhere, in two main areas.

Miss Lilly and W.H. Gardner both show that although in his early verse Hopkins sometimes used compounds and syntax similar to those in Welsh verse,[3] and in his lecture-notes of 1873 or 1874 showed a strong interest in alliterative verse,[4] his encounter with Welsh poetry gave him what he had not had before - a strict formal discipline and a powerful tradition to draw on.[5] The Welsh bardic tradition was of course an oral one, and since Hopkins had defined poetry as a "figure of spoken sound" just before he went to Wales,[6] the tradition he found in Wales must have had an immediate appeal, simply because it so fully exemplified the theory of poetry he was developing. But I would argue that the tradition meant more to him; Hopkins was a man who by temperament and training fully accepted, and needed, authority, order, discipline, in every sphere of his life, and yet at the same time he

1. ibid., pp. 192, 196.
2. ibid., p. 194. W.H. Gardner, ibid., p. 154.
3. G. Lilly, op. cit., pp. 194, 196; W.H. Gardner, op. cit. pp. 137-138.
4. JP., pp. 283-288.
5. G. Lilly, op. cit., pp. 205; W.H. Gardner, op, cit., p. 157.
6. JP., pp. 267-289.

delighted in exploiting and extending the freedom he had within the laws he adopted.[1] To my mind this is the most significant and creative conflict in Hopkins, more important than that between the priest and the poet, or the aesthete and ascetic. Given this, the Welsh tradition probably represented for Hopkins a very old and authoritative (but still living) tradition - a survival from the days when poetry was truly itself[2] - which could vindicate his poetic theories (and fulfill his poetic needs), in much the same way that he felt Duns Scotus vindicated his epistemology and ontology.[3] This is of some importance: to begin

1. cf. the views of F.R. Leavis on the Author's Preface (quoted by Robinson, op. cit., p. 58, from Gerard Manley Hopkins: Reflections after Fifty Years, The Hopkins Society Second Annual Lecture, London, 1971, p. 5) and followed by Robinson. They argue that Hopkins's justifications of himself by referring to the work of Shakespeare and Milton ("officially great poetry") were simply efforts to define and justify himself in relation to what was generally acknowledged to be good and need not (and probably don't) bear much relation to what he was doing. There is some truth in this, but it underestimates considerably Hopkins's very real belief in and acceptance of the authority of poets like Milton and Shakespeare, and, what is more difficult to maintain, it implies that there is no real link between the three poets.

2. This conclusion is less conservative than that of Miss Lilly and W. H. Gardner, who both feel that Hopkins would have developed something like Welsh verse even if he had not discovered it; this is probably true, but it under-rates in my view the extent of the influence Welsh verse had on him - in spirit as well as practice - and the kind of precedent it was for him; W. H. MacKenzie quotes Dr. Küper's statistical analysis of several poets, one Welsh, the rest English Victorians, and the results reveal the extent of the influence: "Dr. Küper has carried out a fascinating analysis of the proportion of vowel and consonantal sounds worked into patterns of cynghanedd or less involved echoes of alliteration and assonance in sample pieces by the Welsh poet Dafydd ap Gwilym, Hopkins ('The Sea and the Skylark', and 'The Windhover'), and other melodious Victorian poets. He finds that the Welsh poet linked about eighty percent of his, Hopkins fifty-seven percent, Swinburne (who is often thought to have sacrificed sense to sound), under thirty-five percent, Tennyson and Christina Rossetti thirty-two percent and her brother Dante Gabriel about half of Hopkins's figure at twenty-seven percent." (p. 230). We may add that there is a great difference between writing cynghanedd accidentally and intending to write it, and as Hopkins said of sprung rhythm, "to recognise the form you are employing and to mean it is everything". "If he does not mean it then he does not do it." LRB. p. 156.

3. See Gardner, Vol. 1, pp. 21-31.

with, it underlines Hopkins's recovery (albeit instinctive rather than deliberate) of the old, alliterating mode in English poetry - though it should also be stressed that his poetry is more complex and richer in its local patterns and meanings - and emphasizes the need to base our appreciation of the poems upon a knowledge of the traditions and conventions which permeate the art and demand specialised responses from us. This would include an understanding of the various conventionalised sound-patterns used, and of the way they knit lines together, enrich the meaning, and become part of the structure of the poem as a whole; further, it would involve understanding how the sound-patterns - at least in old alliterative verse and probably in Hopkins as well - necessarily distorted the syntax so often that various syntactic liberties become accepted or conventional; and lastly, it means that we need to adjust minds grown used to a poetry spread out before us on the page, and appreciated in silence, to an oral, linear poetry. This does involve considerable changes in our appreciative sensibilities, which is one reason why the work of Miss Lilly and others is so valuable, since it has led to a clarification of Hopkins's technique and a modification of our response to one more attuned to the traditions and forms of cynghanedd and other Welsh poetic devices.

A further important consequence for Hopkins's poetry of his acceptance of the tradition is that it heightens the formal element in his verse. He already espoused form in its more usual guise - rhyme, line length, metre, and so on (in one respect the lecture notes on "Rhythm and the other structural parts of rhetoric - verse" are a thorough exploration of the various ways of creating form in verse) - but the extent

to which the Welsh devices permeated the verse, and their extraordinary intricacy and strictness, greatly intensify the formality of the verse. This point has been discussed in previous chapters and in the first part of this one, but it is necessary at this stage to give it more detailed consideration.

The question of formality is difficult to define except in terms of tone and artifice; Hopkins obviously uses alliteration, assonance, and different kinds of rhyme in varying degrees, but in those cases where he uses them a great deal we will find the tone to be very different both from his own more conventional poetry and much English lyric poetry as well. We need to distinguish two kinds of tone: the one is what we normally mean by "tone" - the manner of speaking which defines what we mean and our attitude to what we are saying; the other is, or can be, quite independent of "tone" in this sense, and is created by the verse itself - its principles of composition, and structure - and to a lesser degree by the tradition and genre to which the poem belongs. I will therefore call this kind of tone structural tone. Structural tone ranges from being spontaneous and natural (that is, the diction, syntax and rhythm are close to the way we normally speak or write informally, such as we find in free verse), to the highly ordered and obviously artificial, such as Augustan verse, a great deal of Elizabethan verse, and many of Hopkins's poems. We can also define structural tone in terms of the dominant kinds of structural principle involved. For example, that of the Old and Middle English alliterative stress verse is very different from the syllabic-stress poetry of the seventeenth century, and both are different again from the poetry of the eighteenth century. These are obvious but important points; we adjust to them without thinking, but an awareness of them can deepen our enjoyment of the poetry. Clearly, the structural tone

of most poetry will occupy a middle ground somewhere between the natural and the very artificial; poetry like this will often be the kind that conceals the art - its surface is normal enough not to draw much attention to itself, and yet we find the poetry has a vividness and potency far in excess of ordinary language - largely due to the very complex order created in the language.[1] However, in the continuum between the natural and the artificial there comes a stage when the poetry is openly artificial, makes a point of being so. Part of the pleasure this kind of poetry affords is the pleasure of seeing how skilfully the poet has handled the devices and forms he has set out to use; there is, in short, a pleasure in the very artificiality of the verse. On the whole, Hopkins's poetry belongs in this category, though I should stress that there is a considerable range, from poems occupying the middle ground to others which are very artificial; nevertheless, for the most part, Hopkins's poems quite overtly announce their artificiality; they leave us in little doubt that they are artefacts, with no pretensions to being anything else.[2]

1. cf. the following remarks by Winifred Nowottny: "... I should have to say that in my own opinion the chief difference between language in poems and language outside poems is that the one is more highly structured than the other, and the more complex organisation set up in poems makes it possible for the poet both to redress and to exploit various characteristics of language at large." The Language Poets Use, Athlone Press, University of London, 1965, p. 72.

2. Professor Elisabeth W. Schneider has distinguished two styles in Hopkins, a baroque style and a plain one (The Dragon in the Gate, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1968, pp. 138-141, 174-176, 177-178), and she uses similar criteria to define the differences between them. This is a useful distinction, as are the terms she uses, but only as far as they go; the distinction I have made between the relatively artificial (or natural, depending on one's point of approach) and the very artificial is more thorough, since it defines the poems with reference to a greater number of their characteristics, and in some cases would cut across her categorisations - that is, a poem she would say is in the plain style (for example, "No worst, there is none")I would argue is in fact quite highly structured and "artificial" and is therefore closer to the baroque than she supposes. I should add that my distinctions are intended for different purposes from hers, and both have their uses and value.

Before I illustrate these points, it will be helpful to distinguish between two different kinds of artificiality, both of which occur in Hopkins's verse. There is first what we might call conventional artificialities, that is artificialities shaped by forms and devices which are conventional or traditional, such as the various verse and stanzaic forms, the varieties of cynghanedd, and so on. These are usually strict and fixed, requiring considerable skill in their use. And secondly, there are artificialities which have no obligatory and fixed forms, but are developed as the poet needs them - perhaps an unusual modification of syntax, or a unique pattern of vowel and consonant rhymes. These are likely to be more haphazard and infrequent: indeed, their effectiveness largely depends on their uniqueness - this particular device emerging naturally from the verse at this particular point. The usefulness of this distinction lies in the help it can give in defining the kinds of responses we make to a poem; a work whose structure is artificial because the poet has used a large number of conventional structural patterns and devices will meet with an appreciation which responds to the conventionalised significances these devices embody, whereas a work using original structural organisation necessarily requires a very different response, sensitive to the unique, local significances, and probably requiring greater effort on the part of the reader. We need not be too strict in classifying according to these distinctions, since they are not intended, or even able to make very fine judgements; language resists analysis of this kind - for example, some artificialities, again, occupy middle ground in being derived from traditional forms, but are not so different that they are quite like one or the other; furthermore, conventional artificialities in one language may have all the impact of originality in another. Both these points apply to Hopkins's poetry and we need to proceed warily.

The examples that follow illustrate the range in the degree of artificiality present in Hopkins's poetry.[1] The first is an example of cynghanedd bengoll, a pattern in which the consonants rhyme in the first part, but the line has unalliterated syllables at the end:

Now burn, new born to the world.[2]

The next is an example of cynghanedd draws, in which the consonants of the first part rhyme with those of the second, but with an unrhymed portion between the rhyming sections, though modified slightly:

To bathe in his fall-gold (mercies,) to breathe in his all-fire glances[3]

Here, the "l" and "f" consonants are reversed in the second part, though as Gardner points out neither that nor the use of non-alliterating consonants prevent Hopkins's verse from having effects very like cynghanedd.[4]

The next two lines are examples of cynghanedd sain, the first strict, the second modified. In this device, the line is divided into three parts; the ends of the first and second parts have full-rhyme, and the second and third parts are linked by consonant-rhyme:

1. These are taken from examples used by Miss Lilly and W.H. Gardner; they can only suggest rather sketchily what Hopkins has done, and since these two writers have shown much more fully his achievement in this regard, the reader might usefully examine the many illustrations they give.
2. Poems, 28, stanza 34.
3. ibid., stanza 23.
4. op. cit., pp. 149-150.

In grimy / vasty / vault.[1]

Time's tasking, / it is fathers that asking / for ease[2]

These are all examples of conventional artificialities taken into English from Welsh, and they raise the problem mentioned earlier of determining their status in English. On three grounds I think we must accept them as conventional artificialities in English, much as we accept the sonnet form as such: first, Hopkins clearly meant to use these devices, and since "to mean it is everything", we can assume the poet wanted his readers to respond to them in much the same way that Welsh readers would respond to them in Welsh; secondly, there was at one stage a very strong alliterative tradition in English and any readers familiar with it will find it easy to accept Hopkins's practice as a reshaping of that tradition - in fact, as Hopkins himself notes, alliteration is common in nineteenth century verse, and he goes on to observe "one may indeed doubt whether a good ear is satisfied with our verse without it."[3] Given this, the poet's practice should encourage readers to accept it as a formalisation of a perennial tendency in the language. And thirdly, Hopkins used these devices so consistently during his mature period that he develops a convention for himself; a reader may at first find the sound-rhymes unusual and apparently inconsistent, but familiarity and study will reveal their underlying rules. However, the same cannot be said of phrases like "wind-lilylocks-laced" or the parenthetical

1. Poems, 60, p. 96.
2. ibid., 28, stanza 27.
3. JP., p. 284.

suspension in "Tom's Garland"; these are examples of artificial structures which owe little to convention, and we respond to them in a different way - perhaps with incomprehension at first, but gradually their meaning (and purpose) are assimilated by the mind, and the phrase or section becomes particularly significant because of the telling unusualness of the structure and because of the effort we have put into unravelling the sense. But having made this distinction it must be stressed that the more important one remains that drawn between the moderately and the highly artificial, since it is this which defines the character of the poems more closely.

To fill out our understanding of the ways in which Hopkins increased the artificiality of his verse, let us examine a few more examples. In the line given earlier,

Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease,

in addition to the rhyme and alliteration noted Hopkins has linked the opening words with initial consonant-rhyme, "tasking", "fathers" and "asking" with vowel-rhyme, and there is also a subordinate pattern of "s" sounds which unobtrusively ties the whole line together. The next example contains a combination of cynghanedd sain and cynghanedd draws, what Gardner calls a "kind of metrical tmesis"[1]:

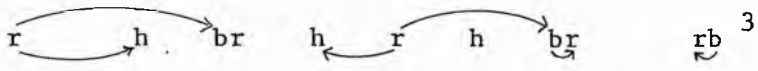
(Never ask if) meaning it,/wanting it,/warned of it, men go.[2]
sain
draws

1. op. cit., p. 152.

2. Poems, 28, stanza 8. The line is misprinted in Gardner, with no "it" after "meaning", which weakens the argument a little, though the general principle remains true.

Here there is syntactic and rhythmic parallelism as well, which adds another dimension to the structure of the line. The next lines illustrate what Gardner calls reversal and resolution:[1]

> Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke rabble.[2]



[3]

The sense of the line obscures the consonant-patterns, yet there is an interweaving effect present in the line up to the penultimate word followed by the sudden reversal of "rabble", which underlines the powerfulness of the image of the passengers as a terrified, lost and broken crowd.

For the final illustrations I quote Gardner at some length:

> In each of the following lines, the first alliterative group is resolved into its elements; first regularly (fr > f + r):
>
> (a) "And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day;"[4]
>
> then with reversal (dr) r + d):
>
> (b) "But we dream we are rooted in earth - Dust!"[5]
>
> A consonant may be repeated for reinforcement (br > r + b + r):
>
> (c) "The breakers rolled on her beam with ruinous shock;"[6]

1. op. cit., p. 153.
2. Poems, 28, stanza 17.
3. Gardner, op. cit., p. 153.
4. Poems, 28, stanza 15.
5. ibid., stanza 11; "to" was misquoted or misprinted for "in" in Gardner's book.
6. ibid., stanza 14.

> The process is akin to music: a theme is given out, then varied and modified. Each time the effect is "characteristic": in (a) the ideas of alternation and concentrated horror are emphasized by the lettering; in (b) the reversed consonants support the ironic contrast; in (c) we are made to feel the "buck and flood of the wave".[1]

In all these examples, the lines are in some respects like normal descriptive or excited language ("The breakers rolled on her beam"), but taken as wholes the extent to which sound-patterns have structured them is so great that they are lifted well out of ordinary language into a very different linguistic dimension. Quite what this dimension is we must consider shortly, but I would like to look now at some illustrations of the less artificial in Hopkins.

These are hard to come by, but there are poems or sections of poems where a simple and direct language appears, creating a striking contrast in poems otherwise highly artificial. Thus in the middle of The Wreck of the Deutschland we find this:

> On Saturday sailed from Bremen
> American - outward-bound,[2]

and this:

> Well, she has thee for the pain, for the
> Patience; but pity of the rest of them![3]

In this case the alliterated "p" is offset by the relaxed, colloquial

1. op. cit., p. 153.
2. Poems, 28, stanza 12.
3. ibid., 28, stanza 31.

tone, suggesting a degree of intimacy and calm after the passionate exploration of the nun's response to the wreck. It is worth pointing out that apart from the alliteration on "p" and the "pa-" sound of "pain" and "Patience" there are no other patterns present, and it could reasonably be argued that as it stands the utterance is within the norms of ordinary spoken language. "In the Valley of the Elwy" offers something rather different; the tone is suggestive of a man writing a letter; the language is formal enough to indicate that this is written language rather than spoken language (something unusual in Hopkins), but also informal enough to catch the intimate reminiscence between friends. Certainly, the language lacks the abundant chimes characteristic of Hopkins:

> I remember a house where all were good
> To me, God knows, deserving no such thing:
> Comforting smell breathed at very entering,
> Fetched fresh, as I suppose, off some sweet wood.[1]

Last of all, part of a late poem, one of the terrible sonnets:

> With witness I speak this. But where I say
> Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
> Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
> To dearest him that lives alas! away.[2]

Here too there is patterning of sounds, but they are not complex nor do they call attention to themselves in the way the earlier illustrations

1. ibid., 34, p. 67.
2. ibid., 67, p. 101.

do. It is significant that the seven or eight terrible sonnets[1] have, generally speaking, far fewer formal devices and those they do have are not elaborately worked out,[2] in contrast to poems like The Wreck of the Deutschland and "Harry Ploughman" for example. This relative absence of overt and extensive artificiality is a considerable aid in suggesting the tone of a man speaking directly and spontaneously within his "most frightful splintering";[3] amidst intense mental, spiritual pain and struggle the poet is stripped of his elaborate verbal structures; those present are enough to intensify the expression, but are not so intrusive that they edge these poems into the category of the highly artificial.

The discussion so far has revealed at various points some of the differences between the moderately and the very artificial - for example I mentioned the more intimate tone sometimes present in the former group - but it is necessary now to look at these differences more closely. I noted earlier that the extent of structuring in a poem, and the dominant types of structuring principles, together compose structural tone. It is important for the overall argument we are pursuing to define structural tone carefully, since it is one of the more crucial elements fixing the relationship between a poet and his audience, and between the poems and their readers. In poems which are highly artificial, the ordering principles are not submerged within the fabric of the verse, but draw attention to themselves - they insist on being seen and heard,

1. N.H. Mackenzie suggests "I wake and feel", "No worst", "To seem the stranger", "Thou art indeed just", "My own heart", "(Carrion Comfort)", and "Patience", with the possible inclusion of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves". A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thames and Hudson, London, 1981. pp. 167-168.

2. These remarks do not apply to "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "(Carrion Comfort)", most of "No worst, there is none" and parts of "Thou art indeed just, Lord".

3. Hill, p. 105.

that they be appreciated for their own sake as well for being primary elements in the order and meaning of a poem. This is what Hopkins had in mind when he wrote in 1874

> Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake.[1]

In practice this theory works out rather differently, since words in Hopkins's poetry, and the poems' designs and aims, insist on "meaning" in their own right; nevertheless it is possible to appreciate in Hopkins the various "inscapes of speech"[2] for their own sake. In the example that follows, syntactic, rhythmic and sound parallelism is so strong that the pattern can readily be contemplated on its own, though to do that leads nowhere. The great pleasure these lines give is due to the way the lovely images are shaped into a pattern repeated so exactly and yet so differently at every level - sound, syntax, rhythm, meaning: it teases the mind with its contrasts and similarities and rapidly multiplying relations leaping back and forth in both the observable structure and the sense:

> Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, | her wild
> hollow hoarlight hung to the height
> Waste;[3]

1. JP., p. 289.
2. ibid.
3. Poems, 61, p. 97.

These lines point to the four areas where the "tone" that a poetic structure creates around itself makes the most significant impact. The first two I have discussed earlier in different contexts, and I pass over them briefly here. There is first the point that this poetry gives a particular kind of pleasure and demands in its readers sensitivities and responses not required for much English lyric poetry. Second, although Hopkins creates his structures out of elements which emphasize the sound and movement of the verse - rhythm, syntax, vowel- and consonant- rhyme, internal rhyme, verse forms and so on - the speech this creates is very unlike ordinary speech, and even unlike the language of a great deal of English poetry of the same type, where we might expect a certain degree of artificiality. The significant point is that Hopkins is a lyric poet, and yet in a number of his poems we find the lyric passion and thought without the relaxed intimacy, or ease, or natural tone we have come to expect in lyric poetry. This brings us to the third area. Because a number of Hopkins's poems are spoken in a language dissimilar to conventional speech, a different relationship is formed between this poetry and its readers, or, as it may be, its audience.[1]

1. There are a number of poems which are so obviously artificial that they readily form a small group: eg. The Wreck of the Deutschland, "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "Tom's Garland", "Harry Ploughman". However, in view of the discussions in this and the last three chapters, I would suggest that a number of other poems, not so overtly elaborate in terms of form or sound-patterning, also belong to this group, since in other, rather less obvious ways - rhythmically and syntactically in particular - they are as structured and artificial as those mentioned above. Further, as I mentioned in earlier chapters, these "hidden" structures often follow and reinforce outward forms - the pattern of the sonnet for example - and thereby create a more than usual congruity and formality in the relation between these various structures. Thus I would include in the above group poems like "God's Grandeur", "The Windhover", "Hurrahing in Harvest", "Binsey Poplars", "Felix Randal", "As kingfishers catch fire", "To what serves Mortal Beauty?", "(Carrion Comfort)", "No worst, there is none", and "To R.B." It is this group of poems I have in mind in the discussion at this point.

Instead of the sense that a person is speaking naturally (or nearly so) under the pressure of his thoughts and feelings to himself or to someone else, or to us as his readers (and often in quite an intimate manner), we are aware of a much richer, more complex relationship between the speaker of the poem and ourselves. On the one hand there is a greater formality - and in one sense, greater distance - between us and - this is important - both the person speaking the poem (even if it is ourselves) and the poet or the persona speaking in the poem; because these poems' highly artificial and formal structures deny the language naturalness of syntax, intonation and tone, they invoke a voice other than the lyric poet's, and need, as I observed in Chapter 1, to be performed rather than spoken. On the other hand, there is at the same time in these very formal poems an intimacy of contact between reader and poet. The point is clearer if we compare Hopkins to Milton. The latter has a vatic density combined with a grand tone, and he adopts the long perspective or overall view of his subject. In contrast to this, and in spite of speaking on occasions with a vatic voice, Hopkins's poems have the pressure of thought and feeling of lyric poetry, the sense of an inner drama in the poet, and thus, overtly and by implication, they emphasize the humanity shared by poet and readers.[1] Furthermore, the poems have such an intense local life that the reader is kept very close to the details of texture and meaning, and as a result the distance between poet and reader is in some respects quite close, in spite of the formal tone engendered by the density of structure. These remarks bear very closely on a point made in Chapter 5, that on occasions the lyric poet speaks with such intensity and authority "that the lyric 'I' is subsumed in the universal 'we'."[2] In general, it will be found that the very

1. See pp. 137-138.

2. See pp. 138-140.

elaborate poems speak in the latter voice, (a point I will develop shortly) as I observed in Chapter 5, but not in every case, while some of the poems in a "plainer" style speak with the authority of a universal voice. Thus these two pairs of distinctions often agree, but they are not to be identified with one another. In conjunction, they provide a valuable tool for defining the character of Hopkins's poems more closely. For example, "(Carrion Comfort)" is a fairly elaborately structured poem, but speaks in the lyric voice, while "No worst, there is none" does not have a very complex structure but speaks very much for us as a statement of the suffering man experiences; "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" are both elaborate and very powerful poems in the universal voice, but in some contrast to all these the fairly elaborate "Windhover" begins in the person of the poet, and ends by drawing into itself a vision revealed everywhere in the natural world and borne out in human experience - for Hopkins of course, supremely in the life and crucifixion of Christ.

The fourth area of interest derives from a remark I made a little earlier that these highly structured poems need to be performed rather than spoken. In a sense all poetry needs to be performed, and in Hopkins's case the need to perform, and to perform in a particular way is very strong; but in the case of five or so poems which are both very artificial and speak with a kind of universal force (The Wreck of the Deutschland, and the four great experimental sonnets, with the possible inclusion of "The Windhover") the manner of the performance necessitated by the structuring devices Hopkins has used so extensively, and by the voice he invokes, clearly distinguishes this group of poems from all else that he wrote. It is perhaps no coincidence that this group includes five of his greatest poems (I exclude "Tom's Garland",

though to my mind it is still a considerable poem). (This is not to deny an equal stature to his more lyric or less artificial poems - "Felix Randal", "Binsey Poplars", the terrible sonnets, the last poems for example - but the achievement in each case is rather different). The kind of performance required by these five or six poems is even more difficult to achieve than that required by his other poems, since it would need to embody the complexity of tone and relationship outlined above, while at the same time giving full weight to the elaborate texture of the verse and the strength of the thought and feeling. These are so rich and complex that only a very skilled reader could do them justice, but some sense of what is required is probably sufficient for most readers to give them a satisfactory recitation and in doing so to respond fully to them.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the larger group of particularly artificial poems mentioned in a footnote a little earlier also need a rather different performance from the simpler or "plainer" ones. Hopkins's own directions would seem to be vindicated by the character of those poems in the "baroque" style: they need to be spoken slowly, emphasizing the sounds of the words, the nuances of rhythmic movement, and of feeling and thought, and as far as possible articulating the structures in the verse. The fact that they need a rather stylised and formal performance points to some important matters we need to deal with. Perhaps the most significant thing is that by creating so compelling a sense of artifice in the poetry, Hopkins invokes old conventions, or creates new ones (or both), which his poetry lives in and is controlled by. This means that, as in other arts richly imbued with conventions and devices having various kinds of significance, there is a formality, a weight of authority pressing through the fabric of the art, for conventions often are a culture's way of investing its art with

an objectivity and authority gathered from the past. It can reasonably be argued, in my view, that through the voice we hear in Hopkins's verse we catch echoes of the Elizabethan stage, thoroughly conventionalised, but vivid and powerful, absorbed in its relation across the stage to its audience.[1] Something equally important that we are made aware of through the stress rhythms and the alliterative and assonantal patterns, is the voice of the bard or the seer, speaking with the accumulated wisdom and authority of the race. In both cases, there is an expectation that the performance, and the skill of the performance, will give pleasure; in this way Hopkins has written a lyric poetry which can richly afford the pleasures which more usually belong to the stage and to the concert, and once belonged to the recitation of some myth or poem round a fire.

The combination of these qualities gives to a number of Hopkins's poems a character which is unique; they mingle and fuse the passionate thought of lyric poetry with the strength and authority of an elaborate form, creating an art which articulates both the personal experience of the poet as well as the inchoate experience of the men and women he speaks for. In one way this is true of most of Hopkins's mature poems, since so many seem to belong to the race, to insist, by their stress on the voice and the language it speaks, on a shared, ancient community, here, in Britain, and perhaps a community in the wider world to which

1. There is a quality in the group of poems I have in mind which strikes me as vividly like the Shakespearian soliloquy; the sense of a solitary figure unselfconsciously speaking aloud about his deepest concerns or something which has caught his imagination is strong in both. Of all the stage devices, the soliloquy is one of the most artificial, which is of course one reason why film-directors don't have their actors speaking them, but only "thinking" them, since the medium is too realistic to bear the false note a soliloquy would strike.

all humanity belongs.[1] Thus, viewed from a slightly longer perspective as well as in some detail, structural tone helps to define the relation of the poet and the poem to his audience, in much the same way that tone in the conventional sense defines a man's relation with the person he is speaking to, his attitude to what he is speaking about, as well as his general meaning. Both kinds of tone are part of the meaning of a poem, but structural tone can go further and define the poet's place in society, what he holds by virtue of his gifts of wisdom and intellect and artistic skill. The ancient world and the medieval age honoured their poets for those reasons (as do oral societies), giving them a very high place;[2] what is interesting about Hopkins is that in an age when lyric poetry held sway, and the status of the poet had begun to change under the pressure of the growth of science, Hopkins reasserted the poet's original status as a repository of the wisdom and culture of the race, cousin to the priest. It is also interesting that at the time Arnold was saying that poetry must take the place of religion, Hopkins and a few other lesser poets (Patmore and Thompson for example) were revitalizing poetry with a vigorous religious faith - in Hopkins's case

1. cf. the following remarks by Walford Davies: "Hopkins's poetry stood out against developments in Victorian England in a deeper way than could be done by abstractly challenging its theology or lamenting the industrial ruination of its landscapes." "A view of poetry as 'shape which is contemplated for its own sake' may seem surprising coming from a Jesuit, whose official duty it was to teach, convert and persuade. But what it makes clear is that when Hopkins resumed his poetry in 1875 he was calling to his side the very language of an England he thought misguided in its beliefs and dealings with life." op. cit. pp. 47-48. The whole section is interesting.

2. cf. the following: "While men still roamed the forests, they were restrained from bloodshed and a bestial way of life by Orpheus, the sacred prophet and interpreter of the divine will - that is why he is said to have tamed tigers and savage lions. Amphion, too, the founder of Thebes is credited with having moved stones by the strains of his lyre, and led them where he would with this sweet blandishment. At one time this was the way of the wise man: to distinguish between public and personal rights and between things sacred and profane, to discourage indiscriminate sexual union and make rules for married

imbued with a freshness and beauty of great vitality.

The poems, or excerpts from poems, which follow serve to illustrate the points made thus far. I have chosen lyric poems from three different periods, and some of Hopkins's own; these reveal him at his most formal and in his more relaxed moments. It is significant that in the first three poems - even George Herbert's, written in an age almost completely dominated by "artificial" forms - there is an easy, relaxed language and tone evident:

> When first thou didst entice to thee my heart,
> I thought the service brave:
> So many joyes I writ down for my part,
> Besides what I might have
> Out of my stock of natural delights,
> Augmented with thy gracious benefits.
> * * *
> When I got health, thou took'st away my life,
> And more; for my friends die:
> My mirth and edge was lost; a blunted knife
> Was of more use than I.
> Thus thinne and lean without a fence or friend,
> I was blown through with ev'ry storm and winde.[1]

life, to build towns, and to inscribe laws on tablets of wood. For this reason honour and fame were heaped upon the bards, as divinely inspired beings, and upon their songs. After them the illustrious Homer and Tyrtaeus fired the hearts of men to martial deeds with their verses. In song, too, oracles were delivered, and the way to right living taught; the favour of kings was sought in Pierian strains; and singing-festivals were devised as a close to the year's long toils. So there is no need for you to blush for the Muse, with her skill in song, and for Apollo the God of singers." Horace, "On the Art of Poetry", Classical Literary Criticism, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, pp. 92-93.

1. The English Poems of George Herbert. (Ed. C.A. Patrides) London, J.M. Dent, 1974, "Affliction I", pp. 66-67.

Next, a poem by Hopkins's contemporary, Thomas Hardy:

The Mound

For a moment pause:-
Just here it was;
And through the thin thorn hedge, by the rays of the moon
I can see the tree in the field, and beside it the mound -
Now sheeted with snow - whereon we sat that June
When it was green and round,
And she crazed my mind by what she coolly told -
The history of her undoing,
(As I saw it), but she called 'comradeship',
That bred in her no rueing:
And saying she'd not be bound
For life to one man, young, ripe-yeared, or old,
Left me - an innocent simpleton to her viewing;
For, though my accompt of years outscored her own,
Hers had more hotly flown ...
We never met again by this green mound,
To press as once so often lip on lip,
And palter, and pause:-
Yes; here it was! [1]

The difference between Hardy and a later poet from across the Atlantic is surprisingly small.

Lodged

The rain to the wind said,
'You push and I'll pelt.'
They so smote the garden bed
That the flowers actually knelt,
And lay lodged - though not dead.
I know how the flowers felt. [2]

1. Thomas Hardy, Selected Poems, (Ed. David Wright) Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978, p. 321.

2. The Complete Poems of Robert Frost, London, Jonathan Cape, 1951, p. 276.

Bereft

Where had I heard this wind before
Change like this to a deeper roar?
What would it take my standing there for,
Holding open a restive door,
Looking down hill to a frothy shore?
Summer was past and day was past.
Sombre clouds in the west were massed.
Out in the porch's sagging floor,
Leaves got up in a coil and hissed,
Blindly struck at my knee and missed.
Something sinister in the tone
Told me my secret must be known:
Word I was in the house alone
Somehow must have gotten abroad,
Word I was in my life alone,
Word I had no one left but God.[1]

Hopkins's "Spring and Fall" is not far in tone and mood from these:

Márgarét, áre you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Léaves, líke the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Áh! ás the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sórrow's springs áre the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It ís the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.[2]

1. ibid., p. 277.

2. Poems, 55, p. 88.

But "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is altogether different, though its subject is fairly close to "Spring and Fall":

> Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, | vaulty,
> voluminous, ...stupendous
> Evening strains to be time's vast, | womb-of-all,
> home-of-all, hearse-of-all night.
> * * *
> Heart, you round me
> right
> With: Our evening is over us; our night | whelms, whelms
> and will end us.
> Only the beakleaved boughs dragonish | damask the tool-
> smooth bleak light; black,
> Ever so black on it. Our tale, O our oracle! [1]

It may be argued that Hopkins is consciously adopting the tone of the prophet in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", and the poem is not a fair example of what has been discussed. However, the following excerpts indicate that the formal and impassioned tone was one Hopkins used from time to time throughout his career:

> Now burn, new born to the world,
> Double-natured name,
> The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
> Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,
> Mid-numbered he in three of the thunder-throne!
> Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he
> came;
> Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
> A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a
> lightning of fire hard-hurled.[2]

1. ibid., 61, pp. 97-98.
2. ibid., 28, p. 62.

How far from then forethought of, all thy more
boisterous years,
When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,
Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and
battering sandal! [1]

Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
Sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out;
nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time beats level. [2]

A poem which is an especially good example is "Harry Ploughman", with its burden-lines; as I mentioned earlier, Hopkins felt these could be spoken by a chorus, though he does not say what kind of chorus he had in mind.[3] Nevertheless, the air of summary the burden-lines have and the chorus-like effect do add a formal tone which is a little out of the ordinary, even in Hopkins.

A corollary to the question of artifice and formality in Hopkins's verse is that, in addition to the points already raised, the extent of the structuring in his poetry is probably a necessity in view of the strength and intensity of his feelings, for the artifice is an objective mould, a discipline which controls and directs the energy released by the feeling in the poem; at the same time though, it is also true that the presence of the human voice in the poems saves them from the overbearing weight of the artificiality, and the consequent fossilization

1. ibid., 53, p. 87.
2. ibid., 72, p. 105.
3. LRB., p. 263.

squeezing the verve of life from the verse (though it is doubtful whether "Tom's Garland" can be saved in this way). This introduces an important point, which is the problem of impersonality in Hopkins: on his own admission, art should not be "your d-d subjective rot",[1] but there is a view of Hopkins which argues that the artificiality, and the extent of its use, is subjective rot of the least desirable kind, since it is "self-expression at its most relentless, ...a vehicle for the individual will to impose itself on time".[2] There are two answers to this: first, as we know from "Henry Purcell", Hopkins placed great value on an art which laid bare the "abrupt self" of the artist and of all men in general but one of Hopkins's emphases in that poem is that the revelation of the self is unwitting: the artist has his eye on one thing, his artistic purpose, unaware that he is laying bare with the utmost vividness the "forgèd feature". This suggests that Hopkins understands subjective art as art indulging in the expression of self, and using the natural world, or a person, an experience perhaps, as a foil to the ego. This is made much worse in Hopkins's view because it destroys "earnest": the artist is pretending to do one thing when he is really at another.[3] In view of this it would be hard to maintain that Hopkins's poetry is relentless self-expression, since he is so manifestly earnest, so intent on expressing what he sees, and hears and knows, rather than himself. The second answer is, as Walford Davies points out,[4] that for Hopkins language was deeply significant and meaningful in itself; its rules,

1. LRB., p. 84.
2. Donald Davie, "Hopkins as Decadent Critic", Purity of Diction in English Verse, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1967, p. 182.
3. LRB., pp. 218, 225.
4. op. cit., p. 38.

its sounds, its rhythms - its instress and inscape in short - all have an independent life, and under the pressure of the poet's heightened mental awareness during the process of creation, fall into patterns and relations which in a sense are independent of the poet. In a passage I quoted earlier on the "language of inspiration", the true language of poetry, Hopkins wrote:

> I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or passive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or to strike into it masked.[1]

Walford Davies observes of this passage:

> The interesting thing about the letter to Baillie is that the word 'language' does not simply denote 'diction' but the nature of poetic insight when it strikes us with a sense of suddenly discovered inevitability.[2]

Seen in this way, the artifice in Hopkins is a kind of objective, and impersonal mould shaped by the language itself, forming the poet's thought from without and giving it a strength and authority beyond the merely personal. I have drawn attention to a point that James Milroy emphasizes, that Hopkins saw language as a part of the created order, with its own laws and identity needing to be discovered, and he goes on to stress also, as part of the same attitude, that Hopkins rarely broke a rule in English; his habit was to exploit or extend existing rules.[3] Thus, when Hopkins says that "Poetry is speech framed for contemplation

1. FL., pp. 217.
2. op. cit., p. 38.
3. op. cit., pp. 51-53, 88, 189.

of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning",[1] he is not suggesting an art for art's sake, based on the musicality of language, but an art with the right degree of impersonality; language communicates in its own way as well as in ours.

This discussion on form and artificiality points back to some remarks made in the first part of this chapter on the contrast between twentieth century views of form (represented by Allen Ginsberg) and earlier ones, of which Hopkins would be a fairly conservative representative.[2] I mentioned in the earlier discussion that for Hopkins poetic forms "were not artificial, arbitrary or preconceived, but natural, ideal, exactly suited to various kinds of expression ...." To these observations we can add two more drawn from subsequent discussions. The first of these is that Hopkins's use of fairly complex forms calls up the presence of a much older voice - or perhaps I should say older voices. One can detect not only the voice of the bard, but also echoes of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era, and clearest of all, the lyric poet. For all his narrow range, Hopkins does possess the archetypal voice of man at his most personal, nakedly confronting experience. And yet, as was pointed out earlier, the forms save this poetry from being merely personal, and at times the artificiality

1. JP., p. 289.

2. See pp. 364-366.

invests the lyric voice with a profound and compelling universality. This leads to the second point, which is that poetic forms often have such perfect proportions between the various parts, such balance and harmony and a kind of musical beauty in the intricate patterns of assonance and alliteration and the interlaced rhymes that they have a curious power of moving us very deeply, rather as music does. Why this should be so is difficult to say, but perhaps it is because we intuitively grasp a seemingly miraculous fusion of the outer harmonies of the form with the thought and feeling - often strong and turbulent - and as a result the inner energies of the poem are ordered, purged, and made a part of the harmony we perceive in the form; in short, we experience the realisation of an ideal. Perhaps - but the musical analogy may be more than an analogy, and it is very interesting to discover that a poet who, like Robert Lowell has consciously abandoned conventional forms in favour of freer and more personal ones, should acknowledge this characteristic power of the older forms:

> You seem to use less and less formal devices such as rhyme, metre and stanza which to some extent occur in your earlier poetry. Do you feel that these devices are generally inadequate in modern poetry or that they just don't suit what you personally want to say?
>
> Hughes: I use them here and there. I think it's true that formal patterning of the actual movement of the verse somehow includes a mathematical and a musically deeper world than free verse can easily hope to enter. It's a mystery why it should be so. But it only works of course if the language is totally alive and pure and if the writer has a perfectly pure grasp of his real feeling... and the very sound of metre calls up the ghosts of the past and it is difficult to sing one's own tune against that choir. It is easier to speak a language that raises no ghosts.[1]

1. Egbert Faas and Ted Hughes, "Ted Hughes and Crow", London Magazine, Vol. 10, No. 10, January 1971, pp. 19-20.

Hopkins provides Hughes with something of an answer, since in spite of being a strict formalist he has a particularly individual voice, and when he raises ghosts he calls them to his side to sing with him rather than against him. And above all, Hopkins had available to him that "musically deeper world" and it is these "figures of spoken sound" which give his poems a rare presence and power.

Part IV

Thoughts Towards an End

CHAPTER 11

Conclusions

It is now nearly a hundred years since Hopkins died and just over sixty since his poems were first published; the anomalies and critical problems which arose as a result of his late publication are slowly being resolved as the decades pass: from being hailed in the '30s and '40s as far ahead of his time, a poet who pre-empted many of the developments of the first part of the twentieth century, he is now being more and more firmly placed in the latter half of the nineteenth.[1] Indeed, his most salient characteristics, some would argue, make him pre-eminently a Victorian, which is his great value, and any attempt to see him in other terms will distort our understanding of him.[2] The arguments advanced in this thesis would I hope provide some grounds for disagreeing with this view, or at least for qualifying it considerably, since in some important respects he is very unlike his contemporaries, and what this century has valued in his work have been in large part those features which are most distinctively un-Victorian. But the longer perspectives have also meant another parting of the ways for critics of Hopkins. The first parting has probably always existed: from early on there were critics who intensely admired Hopkins and defended him vigorously, and others who disliked his poetry and what it represented a great deal - Yvor Winters being the most redoubtable member of this group. However, as Hopkins has moved further from us and has come to seem more and more

1. See, for example, Milroy, Wendell Stacy Johnson, Gerard Manley Hopkins: the Poet as Victorian (New York, Cornell University Press, 1968), and Alison G, Sulloway, Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper (London, Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1972).

2. See Howard W. Fulweiler, Letters from the Darkling Plain, Columbia, Missouri University Press, 1972, pp. 21-23, 122-126, 161-163.

Victorian, a less polarised judgement of him has begun to appear: some critics acknowledge his achievement as considerable, or notable, or interesting, but it is a qualified judgement - far from Leavis's affirmation that "He is likely to prove, for our time and the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest":[1]

> In the 1930s Michael Roberts opened his enormously influential Faber Book of Modern Verse not with Hardy but Hardy's contemporary G. M. Hopkins, then all the rage for his sprung-rhythm and surrealistic-looking handling of imagery. Yet it is Hopkins who now seems to have faded into the Victorian background, to belong with the stained-glass of Burne-Jones ...[2]

The rise of Hardy as a major nineteenth and twentieth century poet is an interesting phenomenon, and probably owes much to a combination of a reaction against T. S. Eliot's influence in modern English literature and the discovery that for all his apparent simplicity and quaintness, Hardy had a remarkably modern sensibility and structure of belief.[3] The

1. "Gerard Manley Hopkins", op. cit. p. 36.

2. David Wright, Introduction to Thomas Hardy, Selected Poems, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1978, p. 27. For other opinions, rather more complimentary than this, see Elisabeth W. Schneider, The Dragon in the Gate, pp. 1-2, Bernard Bergonzi, Gerard Manley Hopkins, pp. 192. It is interesting that F. R. Leavis appeared to qualify his earlier judgement of the poet: his lecture to the Hopkins Society in 1971 ("Gerard Manley Hopkins: Reflections after Fifty Years") constitutes a lengthy and rather unsatisfyingly oblique qualification of the views expressed in New Bearings in English Poetry, and ends by (apparently) admiring the man more than the poetry.

3. F. R. Leavis, perhaps significantly, also came to rate Hardy rather higher than he had done earlier in his career.

absence of the latter qualities in Hopkins helps to account for the qualified estimations of critics like David Wright. But at the same time Geoffrey Hill and James Milroy and others have argued most cogently that Hopkins's achievement is considerable, that for all his limitations he remains one of the great poets of the nineteenth century and hence has a place amongst the major poets in English. It is now some time since W. H. Gardner began the debate as to whether Hopkins is a (major) lesser poet or a (minor) great poet,[1] and although such attempts to categorise may seem awkward and rather dated, the argument is in effect still going on as part of the effort to reach a more accurate assessment of the nature of his achievement. But although the more reserved estimations of Hopkins's work are (in my view) justified, there is another side to his achievement which deserves recognition. There can be little doubt that the discovery, or creation, of Sprung Rhythm is a considerable accomplishment, while Hopkins's handling of the sonnet form is, to say the least, rather singular on occasions, and he made it into a very powerful vehicle capable of expressing a much wider range of experience; furthermore, a number of the poems - The Wreck of the Deutschland, "The Windhover", "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", the terrible sonnets - are among the great poems in the language, and are likely always to be highly regarded. Yet these achievements contain another: one of the more important conclusions this study leads to is that so many of the most vital traditions and influences in English poetry - some long opposed to one another - meet and are reconciled in him. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 it was suggested Hopkins developed ideas about language and poetry based on an ontology and epistemology essentially

1. Vol. 2, Epilogue; Selected Poems and Prose, Introduction, p. xxxvi.

pre-Lockian, pre-Ramist and pre-print, and yet he reveals most clearly some of the central problems and conflicts of his age, as well as its typical characteristics inherited jointly from the eighteenth century and the early Romantic period. We can also see in him a fusion of the elaborate alliterative tradition in English (in his case largely derived from and heavily influenced by Welsh poetry) with the intellectual force and subtlety of the schoolmen - which, as we know, had their first flowering in English with the Metaphysical poets. In the same context it is important to mention Hopkins's reconciliation of the two opposed rhythmic traditions in English: on the one hand there are the strong sense-stress rhythms, which are also most often heavily consonantal and alliterative, and on the other what Walter J. Ong (not entirely correctly) identifies as the Spenserian accentual-syllabic tradition - the flowing, musical, cadenced rhythms which dominated English poetry from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.[1] It was suggested in Chapters 7 and 9 that Hopkins made the latter stronger - more speech-like and emphatic - and by the most delicate control of nuance, tempo and movement in the former gave it a complex and subtle expressiveness normally denied to it and which is not far from the expressive powers of accentual-syllabic verse (though it should be emphasized that Sprung Rhythm as Hopkins used it does not attempt the same effects as common rhythm - each is capable of unique yet not dissimilar expressiveness and Hopkins exploited both to this end). In short, Hopkins managed to have the best of both worlds whether he used Sprung Rhythm or common rhythm, and this is not only a considerable achievement in itself but underlines the way Hopkins straddles and unites the two traditions in his poetry.

1. "Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry", Immortal Diamond, pp. 159-162.

The last matter which needs mentioning in this regard is closely related to the last two and centres on the way Hopkins holds in balance the kind of poetry epitomised by Donne and Shakespeare on the one hand - strong, dramatic, resonant with feeling and the immediacy of experience, yet having a formidable intellectual power and subtlety - and on the other, that developed over the succeeding century and a half, which was quieter, reflective or contemplative, and removed experience to a distance, either to examine it rationally and coolly or to idealise it - or both. The balance in Hopkins is manifested in two or three ways: he wrote some poems which belong in the latter category and others which belong in the former; in poems like "The Windhover", however, he manages to fuse the immediate experience of something remarkable for its beauty or significance with a clear-sighted, reflective gaze considering the meaning and ramifications of the experience. But perhaps most important of all is the way Hopkins builds into his verse the most complex, formal structuring; sometimes this lies behind or within the intonations of the speaking voice, and they do not radically transform the voice, but on other occasions the natural intonations of speech are so taken up, so "heightened" and modified by the extent of the structuring that an entirely new tone and spirit is created. On this basis I grouped Hopkins's poems into three: a small group of four or five highly artificial and formal poems, a larger group of rather less, but still intricately structured ones, and the remainder, which are simpler and more lyrical, but also have a carefully created formal design. (Within the last group the terrible sonnets should be distinguished: although they are similar in their general character to the rest of the group, within Hopkins's corpus they represent a new departure. The poems feel different, and yet when one looks closely the same formal emphasis is apparent, the same interlaced patterns of alliteration and assonance -

though generally these are less prominent. Geoffrey Hill's phrase "frightful splintering" vividly suggests the source and character of the differences, which lie mainly, I believe, in two areas: one is the syntactical simplicity; the syntax of these poems is on the whole the syntax of candid statement - simple, direct, often brief, but rarely using incomplete sentences and far from the syntactic deviations and complexity that is characteristic of much of Hopkins's work: "No worst, there is none"; "I am in Ireland now"; "I am gall, I am heartburn". It is as though the poet, in being at such an extremity, is stripped of everything, and his language likewise is stripped to the bones; nothing but the barest statement can express the sense of being utterly exposed and close to despair or of experiencing little else except pain. The second point pertains to the use of the sonnet form: in the majority of the other poems one is conscious that their design and the development of the thought is strongly purposive, deliberately exploiting the structure of the form to achieve certain ends, usually drawing out the religious or spiritual significance. However in these poems, Hopkins is artistically far more unselfconscious; the forms are less obviously purposive in that Hopkins has not made them match the progress of the thought and feeling as explicitly in order to make a point or achieve a particular end: in the midst of his bewilderment and suffering, there is no longer a point to be made, only the effort to understand, to resist despair and mental collapse with every strained fibre of his being. The forms help to concentrate the meaning without giving the reader the sense that they are directing it in a self-conscious or contrived way, and as a consequence these latter poems have an artless and poignant directness.) Parallel with the division of the poems into three groups a distinction was made between those which speak simply in the lyric voice and those which take on a kind of univers-

ality from the scope and penetration, the fullness, of the thought, feeling and subject of the poem. In this context, it is essential that The Wreck of the Deutschland be singled out. Although I included it in the first group mentioned above, it really manifests the features of all three - from the simplest lyric utterance to the most elaborate and formal:

> Away in the loveable west
> On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
> I was under a roof here, I was at rest,
> And they the prey of the gales;[1]

> Oh,
> We lash with the best or worst
> Word last! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
> Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
> Gush! - flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,
> Brim, in a flash, full! - [2]

We can also detect the two kinds of "voice" described above, from the personal voice - present in the first extract given above and in these lines

> Ah, touched in your bower of bone,
> Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
> Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
> Do you! - mother of being in me, heart,
> O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
> Why, tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start![3]

1. Poems, p. 59, stanza 24.
2. ibid, p. 54, stanza 8.
3. ibid, p. 57, stanza 18.

– to the poet speaking with authority and power beyond the merely personal:

> Now burn, new born to the world,
> Double-naturèd name,
> The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
> Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,
> Mid-numberèd He in three of the thunder-throne!
> Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came;
> Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
> A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire hard hurled.
>
> Dame, at our door
> Drowned, and among our shoals,
> Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the reward:
> Our King back, Oh, upon English souls!
> Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cresseted east,
> More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls,
> Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
> Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.[1]

In its subject matter, its range of tones, its complexity of structure, rhythm and vision, the Deutschland seems to me to be a quite exceptional poem, both in Hopkins's work and in nineteenth century English poetry as a whole. It has in full measure what Geoffrey Hill, following Coleridge, called "the drama of reason",[2] and the quality noted by John Thompson in

1. ibid., pp. 62–63.

2. Hill, pp. 94–99.

a passage I quoted earlier[1] - "the effect as of the richness of experience - 'Full, material, circumstantiated' as Lamb said".[2] Although the Deutschland belongs in a category by itself and does not entirely exemplify the characteristics of the first group mentioned above, in a sense it more fully vindicates the point I wanted to make about artificiality in Hopkins's poetry, since its length and variety and complexity give it an even more elaborate design than poems like "Harry Ploughman" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire". The formality and complexity of these poems at every level - from the phrase to the whole design - balances and transforms the impassioned lyric voice with a firm (sometimes perhaps stern) intellectual order and discipline. It is this reconciliation and the others mentioned earlier which, together with his range and variety and the "drama of reason" he embodied in his work, make Hopkins a poet who stands at the centre of the English poetic traditions; a great wealth and diversity, reflecting the genius of the language, flow into one channel in him, and he is therefore both a very important poet and, within the limits he worked, a rich one - in experience, in style, in his manifold relations to several different traditions and poets in English. These considerations should warn us that he is rather more than simply a Victorian poet; although it is a necessary corrective to earlier views of Hopkins to place him in his period and understand him in relation to it, we should not let this emphasis prevent us from hearing what he has to say to our age, since, like Hardy, though differently, he speaks on many occasions with a startlingly modern voice;[3] nor, in view of his

1. p.302.
2. Thompson, op. cit., p. 140.
3. See Gardner, Vol. 2, p. 371; Hill, pp. 108-111.

position in relation to the various traditions in English poetry, should what he implies about our poetry be ignored; but above all - including all - we should not fail to hear Hopkins's very human voice: with his particular concerns and experiences, and standing astride so much in English poetry, he is compellingly, warmly human - a quality which contributes significantly to the universality that Bernard Bergonzi finds in Hopkins's later poems.

Clearly much work remains to be done on Hopkins, and it is only with a much longer perspective that we will gain a more accurate sense of his place and worth, but what can be done now will facilitate any later judgements. In the area looked into in this thesis there is a great deal which needs either much more exploration or to be examined for the first time. Hopkins's relation to Locke and Descartes and to the broader philosophical influences in England and the nineteenth century deserve particular attention,[1] and in this regard I would also stress that the links I traced between Hopkins and a pre-Ramist, pre-print cast of mind need to be explored further and strengthened by wider terms of reference. Further, Hopkins's understanding of the nature and role of the artist needs to be examined more closely, in relation both to contemporary Victorian thought and to the views held in the Middle Ages and in oral or pre-literate societies. Another area which was barely touched on at all is the influence of classical literature on Hopkins, particularly Greek drama and lyric poetry. We are told he was an exceptionally gifted classicist,[2] and the work of W. H. Gardner on Hopkins's

1. This has been given some attention. See Thomas A. Zaniello, "The Sources of Hopkins's Inscape: Epistemology at Oxford, 1864-1868", The Victorian Newsletter, Vol. 52, 1977, pp. 18-24.

2. See Bernard Bergonzi, op. cit. pp. 48,49.

rhythms would suggest that he absorbed more than a little from his classical studies into his English poetry.[1] But what may be more important in the long run is the influence Greek philosophy, poetics, drama and poetry had on his own theory of poetry. His mention to Everard Hopkins of the kind of art Greek lyric poetry essentially was is a suggestive hint,[2] and I have mentioned in one or two places the presence of Aristotelian thought in his work. The classical influence came both directly and indirectly, in the latter instance largely filtered through the schoolmen, especially St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, and it is therefore a very complex and difficult area to work in, demanding scholars competent in at least three fields. A rather less exacting area which needs investigation is Hopkins's relation to the dramatic theories and practice of his day. This would include an examination of his early attempts at drama and dramatic monologue, as well as "St. Winefred's Well".[3] The influence of Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan dramatists might also prove a fruitful line of enquiry.[4] And of course, the poems themselves need much further study. I have only been able to look at the features of the poetry which were most relevant to the central arguments I was pursuing, and both these and a number of other aspects need close

1. Gardner, Vol. 2, pp. 98-136. See also John Louis Bonn, S.J. "Greco-Roman Verse Theory and Gerard Manley Hopkins", Immortal Diamond pp. 73-92.

2. See p. 105.

3. Some work has been done in this area. See Florence K. Riddle, Hopkins' Dramatic Monologues", Hopkins Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 51-66.

4. Hopkins confessed to not having read Marlowe (LRB. p. 227), but he had read Jonson (LRB. p. 237, CRWD. p. 75), and evidently thought highly of him.

examination. Moreover, the poems also richly repay study in other respects, throwing light not only on Hopkins's work as a whole, but also on the age in which he lived and on the many influences which came to bear on him. He is one of those men who illuminate the thinkers, writers and ideas which influenced him as much as they him.

Although so much remains to be done in the area looked into here, I would hope that the evidence of the poems and of Hopkins's scattered observations in his letters, journals and papers, together with the discussions and arguments drawn from these, have shown that Hopkins's emphasis on the need to perform his poems is not simply a question of giving them a dramatic and telling recitation (although this is important), but is of central significance and lies at the heart of his poetic theory and his art.[1] There are of course many reasons for this - his understanding of the nature of the world and of language, of man's place in the creation, his sense of the original and true nature of poetry, and so on - but I would like to suggest one more reason, and in doing so both put what has been said already in a new light and underline how important performance - in a very full sense of the term - is to Hopkins's poetry.

In his fine and interesting article "The Idea of Energy in the Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins",[2] Gerald Bruns suggests that the concepts of instress and inscape owe much to nineteenth century ideas of energy.

1. It is not enough to say, as Norman White does (though it is a step in the right direction), "... we should be demanding (and Gerard's shade would certainly support us) Heard-Hopkins, not Seen-Hopkins. We do need properly worked out and performed spoken-Hopkins - perhaps a specially funded project - once we have the words settled." Review of The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hopkins Quarterly, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1980, p. 39.

2. Renascence, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1976, pp. 25-42.

By the time Hopkins was up at Oxford, the Newtonian concepts of matter as static bodies moved in space by mechanical-like forces acting from without had been replaced by the idea that the physical fabric of the world was made up of both matter and energy, held in a dynamic and indefinable relationship. In Bruns's words -

> The nineteenth-century physicist perceived, as did Hopkins, that each thing - even the most ponderous and inorganic body - "goes itself" (Poems, p. 90), and that it does so because there is more to reality than mechanical force or organic growth: there is also energy, imponderable and indestructible, present everywhere but unthinkable except in relation to its results, and itself the medium by which things become accessible as objects of experience.[1]

After some cogent observations about the way Hopkins perceived the world, and the nature of the relations between himself, his Journal and the world, Bruns fastens on the metaphor of speech in "As kingfishers catch fire" as a pointer to an idea of considerable significance.

> As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
> As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
> Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
> Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
> Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves - goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
> Crying What I do is me: for that I came.[2]

1. ibid., p. 27.
2. Poems, 57, p. 90.

Bruns precedes this extract with the following remarks:

> The metaphor of the speech of nature is a purposeful one, because Hopkins clearly places himself in a hermeneutic relation to the created world as to a text or Book of Nature, whose "compositions" (JP, 145,155) are configurations of energy that enact, as human utterances do, events of differentiation - the "running instress" in Hopkins' words, that "unmistakeably distinguishes and individualises things" (JP, 215). To "read" such compositions (JP, 218) is an interpretive act, a naming in the human language of signs of that which announces itself ... in the natural language of energy ...,[1]

This view of nature and language has two important ramifications. One has been mentioned already, that man's language gives him a special role: he is to mediate for the creation, give it a "human meaning",[2] and "word" it to man and God.[3] This idea can be applied in a wider context, as it is in The Wreck of the Deutschland where the tall nun brings word of Christ, perceived perhaps through the storm and wrecking, but beyond that, known through faith and seen in His own person at the height of the storm:

> But how shall I ... make me room there;
> Reach me a ..., Fancy, come faster -
> Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
> Thing that she ..., There then! the Master,

1. op. cit. p. 32.
2. ibid., p. 33.
3. See "Ribblesdale", Poems, 58, p. 90.

Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head;[1]

The second point is more important. Bruns points out that in one passage Hopkins speaks of words as though they were physical bodies:

> Now every visible palpable body has a centre of gravity round which it is in balance and a centre of illumination or highspot or quickspot up to which it is lighted and down from which it is shaded. The centre of gravity is like the accent of stress, the highspot like the accent of pitch, and as in some things as air and water the centre of gravity is either unnoticeable or changeable so there may be languages in a fluid state in which there is little difference of weight or stress between syllables or what there is changes and again as it is only glazed bodies that shew the highspot well so there may be languages in which the pitch is unnoticeable.[2]

Words have a physical presence and energy, an inward vitality which means that they are similar in nature to objects and creatures in the natural world. If words are seen in this way, charged and active in themselves, then poetry as a formalisation of the several features of speech - of stress and rhythm, of pitch, sound-rhymes, syntax and so on - is "a patterning of energy",[3] a structure which is intensely charged and vital;

1. ibid, 28, p. 60, stanza 28. See Schneider, The Dragon in the Gate, pp. 29-30 and Robinson, p. 118, for arguments in favour of the idea that Christ was supernaturally present to the nun.

2. JP, p. 269.

3. Bruns, op. cit., p. 35.

> For him /Hopkins/ the text is, like nature, active. Its objectivity does not consist in a surface of "mere" words to be penetrated by a reader in search of "depths" or "levels" of meaning; on the contrary, it is the text that penetrates the reader, even as the sound of speech will penetrate an auditor ... Thus, for Hopkins, a text is, when read, an instance of kinesis; it is radiant with meaning, which strikes the reader as light emerging (or, indeed, exploding) from darkness.[1]

The idea that poems are energised and kinetic bears some relation to Hopkins's early ideas on Being, but it is a much more useful concept in relation to the idea of performance. This work began with the suggestion that Hopkins's poems need not so much to be read aloud as performed, and throughout I have sought to define in what ways the poems are dramatic and why we can define them in this way. We saw that in fact the poems are dramatic in rather different ways, and require different kinds of performance.[2] Most would be spoken fairly close to the normal speaking voice, often with the impassioned tones of spontaneous excited utterance, but with some of the formalisation a performance requires. Others, because of the extreme complexity and artificiality of their design, require a far more stylised recitation, although they are still very much in touch with the cadences of the speaking voice. In two or three cases the dramatic character of the verse consists partly in the organisation of the words on the page, but even in these

1. ibid., pp. 35-36.

2. See Appendix B for a brief discussion of the way recent understanding of language's structure bears on Hopkins's directions for the performance of his poems.

cases the verse still demands to be read aloud. It was also seen that these distinctions imply differing relations between the poems and their readers: in all cases the closest contact between the reader and the text is insisted upon, but where this is buttressed by a directness and intimacy in the simpler, more lyrical poems, the smaller group of very formal poems mentioned above create a distance between poem and reader because of their different "tone" (in both the usual and specialised senses in which I used the term) and kind of performance. In a few cases I argued that a public performance was possible, but although there is value in hearing a good recitation of a poem - in either a public or private context - the nature of the poems is such that they require the reader to be himself as closely and actively engaged as possible with them. However, although these distinctions are necessary and important, all the poems possess a quality which Bruns's remarks above and elsewhere help to pinpoint. One facet of this quality is revealed in the last quotation - the poems have a dynamic, kinetic power which penetrates the reader's mind as much as the reader penetrates into the text. Hopkins would have seen this power as a manifestation of instress, and the fact that he applied the term to art as well as nature makes the following remarks by Bruns all the more interesting:

> Hopkins' formalism is energised rather than spatialised: he thinks of poetic speech in terms of what it has in common with nature: namely, <u>energetic form</u>, as though between word and world, poetry and reality, there is a physical continuity - physical not in the sense of mere stuff ("cumbersome and restraining matter" /FL, p. 306/), but in the sense of matter shaped by the flow of energy.[1]

1. ibid. p. 35.

The physical continuity noted here is one reason why we feel Hopkins's poems have so firm a hold on what they describe, since they possess both the penetrative impact of things we encounter in the natural world or our daily experience and the individual form or design which tells us that something is and is one thing, with its own unique character. Inscape is not simply the outwardly perceived form of an inward imperative, but a potent, dynamic union of matter and energy, and Hopkins's poems manifest the same nature in that they are language shaped and energised by the elaborate designs he has created in it, to the point where they become "inscapes of speech". Performance is the means by which the fusion of energy and form - which exists as a potential in the poem on the page rather like latent energy in natural objects - is realised and released; but such a poetry, and the performance it requires, entail something more important than these remarks suggest. Hopkins's poems are particularly fine examples of the dictum that poetry should not mean, but be, that is (in Hopkins's case at least), only when they have being can they mean, or in Bruns's terms, the poems' realised "energetic forms" create "presences" in the mind which have priority over meaning:

> Form, meaning, presence: we can think of these concepts as a series of horizons that open on to one another and constitute, in their totality, the field of poetry. Within this field there are, not discontinuities, but priorities - the priority of sound over sight, of speech over writing, and (evidently more important) of presence over all other categories, even that of meaning, as in these lines from the sonnet, "Henry Purcell";
>
> Not mood in him nor meaning, proud fire or sacred fear,
> Or love or pity or all that sweet notes not his might
> nursle:

> It is the forgèd feature finds me; it is the rehearsal
> Of own, of abrúpt sélf there so thrusts on, so throngs
> the ear.[1]

* * *

> Purcell's compositions mean - indeed, we are told in the poem that his "meaning motion fans fresh our wits with wonder" - but their significance for Hopkins is that, in doing so, they disclose their maker's presence: Purcell "breathes or stirs ... unmistakeably in his works" (LRB, p. 170). This is, moreover, not a psychological but a metaphysical presence: as Hopkins says in the headnote to his poem, Purcell has "uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created both in him and in all men generally". It is presence as disclosure ...[2]

In a similar way, Hopkins sought to capture in his poetic language the "presence" of his subjects, to disclose their nature and significance so clearly it is as though they are sensuously present to the reader. But this means that the "meaning" of a poem is considerably more than our intellectual grasp of what it means. It has a completeness, a fullness which takes in many of our human faculties and attributes, and it is marked off from other kinds of utterance because the language makes concrete a "metaphysical presence" and not merely a set of pointers to it. As I noted in an earlier chapter, Hopkins's poetry requires the assent of the whole man, and in performing a poem we are not simply releasing its latent energy but putting ourselves in a position where we can know in a full and profound way - that is, in every way that our physical make-up and mental, emotional and spiritual faculties enable us to - all that the poem is and all the ways in which it "rhymes" with what

1. Poems, 45, p. 80.
2. Bruns, op. cit. pp. 37-38.

it describes. Some remarks by C. S. Lewis are pertinent here:

> Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality. There are mass emotions which heal the wound; but they destroy the privilege. In them our separate selves are pooled and we sink back into sub-individuality. But in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in the Greek poem, I see with a myriad eyes, but it is still I who see. Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do.[1]

Poetic language of the kind Hopkins used generates in particular the paradox Lewis speaks of here: our engagement with the poem is necessarily so complete that we forget ourselves and participate fully in the experience of the poem; yet at the same time we remain ourselves, and indeed, become even more fully ourselves because our faculties are all aroused, alert and active, working in harmony with one another. The language which creates this kind of experience is no ordinary one. As Howard Fulweiler argues, it is a language of knowledge, and of a particular kind;[2] it is not a set of abstract symbols which stand over against the reality "out there" or the feelings, thoughts and experiences "within" the poet, but is fully part of these things - is a way of knowing as valid as any other available to us and is a good deal more comprehensive than many because it involves so much of our humanity. As I mentioned a little earlier, language gives the natural world a human meaning, but at the same time it

1. An Experiment in Criticism, pp. 140-141.
2. Letters from the Darkling Plain, pp. 11-23, 133-136, 165-166.

brings into our world non-human presences. Poetic language is thus at the frontiers of our encounter with both ourselves and everything other than human - which includes our encounter with the supernatural and the Divine, either in the created world or independently of it. By writing a poetry made for performance, as he said, a "living art", Hopkins invites us to know as well as we can, ourselves, the other-than-human reality which surrounds us on every side, and for Hopkins above all, the Word made flesh, the ground of all being and knowledge.

Appendix A

It was my original intention to include with the thesis a couple of cassettes, one to illustrate a few of the points made, and one or two commercial recordings. However, the commercial recordings were unavailable, and the illustrative cassette seemed more and more unnecessary as the thesis progressed. Nevertheless, it did seem worthwhile to offer some comments on a few of the commercial recordings available. One general comment is in order before any specific comments: of all the recordings I have heard only two showed any real grasp of the metric basis of Sprung Rhythm. Most readers of the poems in common rhythm read them well, and had little difficulty in coping with Hopkins's occasional oddities and awkwardnesses, but Sprung Rhythm obviously presented many problems: the strong stressing and variety of movement seemed to encourage most to read it as an emphatic prose rhythm, and one feels acutely the lack of discipline and a unifying order in the rhythm. Significantly, not many readers took careful note of Hopkins's diacritic marks and directives for performance. Together these factors account for most of the shortcomings I felt existed in many of the recordings.

To keep this appendix a reasonable length, I will give only a few general comments on each recording as a whole, with one or two remarks on individual poems where they call for attention. All these observations are of course very much my own, and as with most of the performing arts, there are likely to be many who disagree with the views given here.

The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins - Margaret Rawlings (Argo RG 13).

This recording is particularly weak on the poems in Sprung Rhythm, with poor control of timing and tempo; the sense of high feeling in

the poems is frequently lost in the delivery which is too fast, and a tone which is too parochial and lilting. In my notes, I noted on several occasions that the patterns of sound were played down, that Hopkins's diacritic marks were ignored (for example, the outrides in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire"), and that the readings lacked the measured, powerful movement Sprung Rhythm needs if it is not to be excited prose. On the other hand, the poems in common rhythm are much better, with far greater control and precision in the rhythms, and consequently the feelings and meanings are more powerfully evoked. Even so, some of the earlier remarks apply to these poems as well, with tonal flatness ("The Starlight Night", "God's Grandeur") and insufficient attention to some important features of individual poems - for example the dialogue at the volta of "The Starlight Night" or the heightened tone of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo".

The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins - Robert Speaight (Spoken Arts 814).

This recording is on the whole much better than the last, though the reader is also weaker in Sprung Rhythm than in common rhythm. There is the same tendency to read the poems too fast, with the resulting loss of emphasis on the sound and rhythmic structures in the poems, but more often there is a sensitive articulation of the rhythms, and care is taken with varying tone and tempo during a poem. I noted that GMH's stresses and outrides were ignored in "The Windhover" and the same is true for "Felix Randal" and "(Carrion Comfort)". On occasions - for example in the terrible sonnets - the pain and indignation and anger are not sufficiently brought out, and the close of "(Carrion Comfort)" is particularly poor in this regard.

Victorian Poetry - Read by Max Adrian, Claire Bloom and Alan Howard (Caedman TC 3004).

On this record, Alan Howard reads "Spring and Fall" and "The Windhover". The former is fair, with a slight loss of control at points, and I noted that it is even a little slow. In "The Windhover" some of the outrides and stresses are ignored, and one or two vital words ("AND" and "Buckle") are not satisfactorily dealt with at all.

Poems for Several Voices - Jill Balcon and Marjorie Westbury (Folkways 9894).

This record includes a recording of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" and it is far and away the best rendering of the poem. The movement and tempo of the rhythm is sensitive and beautifully articulated; both readers have a feel for the sounds in the poem and the interlaced patterns are effectively brought out. What is particularly good about this reading is the way both the repeated "Despair" closing the first part and the transition to the second is managed, with beautiful timing, sense of the sound linking and tempo change.

Dylan Thomas.

Unfortunately I did not make a note of the record company or number in this case, but it is of little consequence, since the poem in question ("The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo") is rather poorly read. The expression is very heightened and declamatory, in itself not a bad thing, but it is monotonously held at the same level

throughout the poem. The pace is occasionally too fast, the repetitions are insufficiently varied, and in places the sense is lost, but there is at the same time quite a good feel for the poem's rhythms.

A Personal Anthology - Richard Burton (Argo ZDSW 714).

This is another poor recording of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo". The tone is flat, the pace is too fast, and there are few changes in tempo. The natural tone of voice is almost entirely missing, and the poem is chanted at high pressure throughout. Burton has a fine voice and superb control, but these qualities do not offset the fact that he has not fully grasped the character of this poem.

The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins - Cyril Cusack (Caedmon TC 1111).

This is one of the best-known recordings of Hopkins's poems, and on the whole it is quite good, though I found it fairly uneven, and in places he seems to be insensitive to a number of important facets of various poems. For example, "Felix Randal" has a weak opening, with the conversational tone not well realized, and the closing lines are not given the climax they require. There is a tendency to read the poems too fast, and quite often I felt that the rhythms in both metric systems (but especially in Sprung Rhythm) were not being perceived sensitively enough, and as a result there was a lack of control, precision and subtlety in the feelings or meanings being conveyed. His reading of The Wreck of the Deutschland was good, with verve and passion and the high feeling the poem possesses, but

there was a tendency to chant it too much, and not to vary the reading with changes in tempo or tone or mood. The renderings of the terrible sonnets were uneven, "(Carrion Comfort)" and "Patience, hard thing!" being powerful and moving, while "No worst" lacked the intensity and pressure the lines so vividly suggest and "Thou art indeed just, Lord" did not have the nuances of the verse so skillfully suggested as Cusack does elsewhere. On the whole though these are fine and interesting readings.

BBC Broadcast -

The Wreck of the Deutschland - Paul Scofield BIRS 2828 R.

This recording was the best I heard: the pace of the reading is quote slow, with due weight given to the sounds of the words and their inter-relations; there is a sound grasp of the metrical basis of the rhythm but this does not prevent the reader from using much variation in tone and tempo and voice quality, from a soft, quiet tone to a harsh, powerful "uttering", from the impassioned chanting of some verses to the easy colloquial or conversational movements of others. There are moments when one might want to question the interpretation offered or the particular rendition of some lines, but on the whole one is impressed with the excellence of the performance.

Appendix B

A selection of the poems, giving the complete texts of the MSS

An appendix of this nature presents two different problems. The first arises from the fact that the poems were never prepared for publication, and as a result there are on occasions a number of variants in the MSS (though on the whole Hopkins's use of diacritic marks is fairly consistent, with one or two notable exceptions), and one is faced with the problem of deciding whether or not to include variants, which variants to include in some cases, and the difficulties of representing these clearly enough. In this instance the problem is compounded by my not having seen all the available MSS, and I am not as familiar with those I have seen as I would like to be. The second problem revolves round the diacritic marks themselves. Hopkins never worked out a completely consistent notation: some marks were used for a while and dropped altogether, others used briefly and then replaced by different ones, while one or two are late developments. Faced with this one can follow a conservative policy, and use the marks Hopkins used in each case, or rationalise his notation and make it as consistent as possible - or follow a course roughly midway between these alternatives. In view of all these difficulties, and in view too of the fact that the main interest is with the poems as we have them rather than with establishing definitive texts, it seems wisest to adopt a conservative policy as a general principle. Thus I follow the text of the Fourth Edition of the poems except in the case where I happen to have discovered that it is incorrect, and this change is indicated below the text. Where variants may be illuminating these will also be given, in most cases after the main text of the poem in question. With particular regard to the diacritic marks, my policy will be to follow Hopkins fairly closely, but

at the same time to rationalise a few of them, either for the sake of consistency (for example the use of ∽ throughout to indicate counter-pointed rhythm, instead of ∞ as well as ∽) or for clarity (for example, the use of an alternative sign for \\ in "Tom's Garland" in order to distinguish it more sharply from // . To give a clearer picture of the marks and their functions, the following table is given, derived from W. H. Gardner:[1]

// > ^ v	= heavy stress - often is, but may not be, metrical stress.
/	= normal stress - usually the metrical stress as well.
• •	= next syllable stressed. This only occurs in sprung rhythm and often indicates a sprung foot, with two adjacent syllables stressed.
∽	= counterpointed rhythm.
◠	= dwell, or lengthening and bringing out of a syllable.
~	= circumflexion, or the lengthening of syllables like "fire" to the point where they take up the time of two, and almost sound like two, syllables.
⌐——⌐	= two adjacent syllables carrying about equal stress in recitation, although one has ostensibly the metrical stress. Only in "To what serves Mortal Beauty?"
⁀	= elision

1. Vol. 1, p. 94.


= outride,

= hurried foot,

rallentando

These marks do not always make it easy to distinguish the metrical stress, especially in Sprung Rhythm, but in most cases the reader can locate it satisfactorily. Hopkins himself said he would mark only where the reader was likely to make a mistake, and this is usually the case. Familiarity with Hopkins's rhythms is of course a great advantage, and will help the reader over many sections which would be inexplicable to a new reader. The variants in the diacritic marks will be indicated in two ways: in the case of marks like ′ or > , brackets round them will indicate that they occurred in an earlier version of the poem but were left out in a later or final one, and footnotes will indicate where the variants occur. In the case of the other marks the phrases with the variants will be given below the main text together with indications as to where they occur.

In view of recent advances in linguistic and metrical analysis it is interesting to consider how far Hopkins's diacritic marks agree with what is now known about the language and poetic rhythms, in particular whether the poet's stipulations place excessive restrictions on the kind of recitations the poems can be given, since we are so aware of the many ways in which a line can be rendered. The short answer to this question is that on the whole Hopkins's marks do not restrict readers, but there are important qualifications. Possibly the most important is Hopkins's stress on what he called vowel accentuation, but which is really syllable accentuation in the rendering of the stress. He did not seem to recognise the importance of pitch in registering stress and hence his verse was made for rather more emphasis on the quality of the syllable than

it would normally be given - although this of course does not alter the use of pitch as a primary determinant of stress. Another qualification must be made in respect of some of the marks Hopkins used: most of them require the reader to bring out what is already present in the verse, but others ask the reader to add an expressive effect, and hence they do restrict the ways a line can be recited. These include the outride, the heavy stress, the hurried foot and the dwell - though not necessarily on every occasion. It is also possible that Hopkins wanted very stylised and impassioned recitations for his poems, a delivery which our ears would find contrived and over-emotional. The modern reader would have to find some way of communicating the pressure of the poet's feelings with a more natural rendition, a task which is not at all easy.

God's Grandeur

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings

It gathers to a (MS A_1).
Marks from MS A_2

The Starlight Night

LOOK at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare! -
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
Rallentando
Buy then! bid then! - What? - Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

Spring

staccato

NOTHING is so beautiful as Spring –

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;

Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush

Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring

The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;

The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush

With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

Rallendanto A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning

In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,

Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,

Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,

Rallendanto Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

In the Valley of the Elwy

I remember a house where all were good
To me, God knows, deserving no such thing:
Comforting smell breathed at very entering,
Fetched fresh, as I suppose, off some sweet wood.

That cordial air made those kind people a hood
All over, as a bevy of eggs the mothering wing
Will, or mild nights the new morsels of Spring;
Why, it seemed of course; seemed of right it should.

Rall.* Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales,
Sf.+ All the air things wear that build this world of Wales;
Only the inmate does not correspond:

God, lover of souls, swaying considerate scales,
Complete thy creature dear O where it fails,
Rall. Being mighty a master, being a father and fond.

Marks from MS A

Why, it séemed of course; séemed of right it should (MS B)

* - Rallentando

\+ - Sforzando

The Windhover

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in
his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and
gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

Falcon
: O how he rung
... then off, : forth
dangerous
No wonder of it:
(All from MS A_1)
(Bracketed marks from MS A_1 and A_2)

Hurrahing in Harvest

SUMMER ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks rise
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely
behaviour
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder
Majestic - as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet! -
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his
feet.

greeting of
MS B

(Bracketed marks from MS A)

The Caged Skylark

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull(:)cage
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house,
dwells -
That bird beyond the remembering his free fells,
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age.

Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage,
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells
Or wring their barriers in bursts of fear or rage.

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest -
Why, hear him, hear him babble and drop down to his nest,
But his own(:)nest,(:)wild(:)nest, no prison.

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,
But uncumbered: meadow-down is not distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones(:)risen.

(Bracketed marks from MS A)

The Lantern out of Doors

Sometimes a lantern moves along the night.
  That interests our eyes. And who goes there?
  I think; where from and bound, I wonder, where,
With, all down darkness wide, his wading light?

Men go by me whom either beauty bright
  In mould or mind or what not else makes rare:
  They rain against our much-thick and marsh air
Rich beams, till death or distance buys them quite.

(:)Death or distance soon consumes them: wind
  What most I may eye after, be in at the end
I cannot, and out of sight is out of mind.

Christ minds: Christ's interest, what to avow or amend
  There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind,
Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend.

their rescue, and (MS A)

(:) from MS A

Binsey Poplars

felled 1879

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
(:)Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All félled, (:)félled, are áll félled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
(:)Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind(÷)wandering
weed-winding bank.

(:)O if we but knew (:)what we do
(:)When we delve or hew -
(:)Hack and rack the growing green!
Since country is so tender
To tóuch, her béing só (:)slénder,
That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all,
(:)Where we, even where we mean
To mend her we end her,
(:)When we hew or delve:
(:)After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
(:)Ten or twelve, (:)only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc ún (:)selve
The sweet especial scene.
(:)Rural scene, a rural scene,
(:)Sweet especial rural scene.

river and wind-wandering (MS A)
(Bracketed marks from MS A)

Duns Scotus's Oxford

(:)TOWERY city and branchy between(:)towers;
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmèd, lark-charmèd, rook-racked,
river-rounded;
The dapple-eared lily below thee; that country and town did
(:)Once encounter in, here coped and poisèd powers;

Thou hast a base and brickish skirt there, sours
That neighbour-nature thy grey beauty is grounded
(:)Best in; graceless growth, thou hast confounded
(:)Rural rural keeping - folk, flocks, and flowers.

Yet ah! this air I gather and I release
He lived on; these weeds and waters, these walls are what
He haunted who of all men most sways my spirits to peace;

Of realty the rarest-veinèd unraveller; a not
(:)Rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece;
Who fired(:)France for Mary without(:)spot.

... haunted ... (MS A)

(Bracketed marks from MS A)

Henry Purcell

The poet wishes well to the divine genius of Purcell and praises him that, whereas other musicians have given utterance to the moods of man's mind, he has, beyond that, uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created both in him and in all men generally.

Have fáir(:)fállen, O fáir(:)fáir have fállen, so déar
To me, so arch-especial a spirit as heaves in Henry Purcell,
An age is now since passed, since parted; with the reversal
Of the outward sentence low lays him, listed to a heresy, here.

Not mood in him nor meaning, proud fire or sacred fear,
Or love or pity or all that sweet notes not his might nursle:
It is the forgèd feature finds me; it is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrúpt(:)sélf there so thrusts on, so throngs(:)the ear.

Let him oh! with his air of angels then lift me, lay me! only I'll
Have an eye to the sakes of him, quaint moonmarks, to his
pelted plumage under
(:)Wings: so some great stormfowl, whenever he has walked his
while

The thunder-purple seabeach plumèd purple-of-thunder,
If a wuthering of his palmy snow-pinions(:)scatter a colossal
smile
(:)Off him, but meaning motion(:)fans fresh our wits with wonder.

Have fair fallen, O
snow-pinions (MS A)
(Bracketed marks from MS A)

Felix Randal

(?)FÉLIX RÁNDAL the fárrier, O is he déad then? my dúty all
ended,
Who have watched his mould of man, big-boned and hardy-
handsome
Pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it and some
Fatal four disorders, fleshed there, all contended?

Sickness broke him. Impatient, he cursed at first, but mended
Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some
Mónths(?)éarlier, since I had our swéet repríeve and ránsom
Téndered to him. Áh well, God rést him áll road éver he
offénded!

This séeing the sick endéars them tó us, us tóo it endéars.
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy
tears,
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix
Randal;

How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous
years,
When thou at the random grim forge,(?) powerful amídst(?)peers,
Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering
sandal!

Felix Randal the farrier,	rambled in it	my heart, child, Felix
...my duty all	Tendered to him	(MS A)

(Bracketed marks from MS A)

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
    As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
    Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
    Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
    Selves - goes its self; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

I say more: the just man justices;
    Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is -
    Christ. For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
    To the Father through the features of men's faces.

Note: The Fourth Edition is in error in printing "itself" in line 7 and not "its self".

Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves

EARNEST, earthless, equal, attunable, | vaulty, voluminous,
... stupendous
Evening strains to be time's vast, | womb-of-all, home-of-all,
hearse-of-all night.
Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, | her wild
hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste; her earliest stars, earlstars, | stárs principal, overbend
us,
Fire-featuring heaven. For earth | her being has unbound; her
dapple is at end, as-
tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; | self in self
steeped and pashed - quite
Disremembering, dismembering | áll now. Heart, you round
me right
With: Our évening is over us; our night | whélms, whélms,
and will end us.
Only the beakleaved boughs dragonish | damask the tool-
smooth bleak light; black,
Ever so black on it. Our tale, O our oracle! | Let life, wáned,
ah lét life wind
Off hér once skéined stained véined variety | upon, áll on two
spools; párt, pen, páck
Now her áll in two flocks, two folds - black, white; | right,
wrong; réckon but, réck, but mind

But these two; ware of a world where but these | two tell, each
off the other; of a rack
Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe - and shelterless, | thoughts
against thoughts in groans grind.

dapple is at an end (MS A)
black, white, wrong, right (MS A)
Stresses in brackets occur only in MS A. The remainder are either in MS A and B, or only MS B.
Hurried foot in line 13 from MS A.

To what serves Mortal Beauty?

To what serves mortal beauty|-dangerous; does set danc-
ing blood - the O-seal-that-so | feature, flung prouder form
Than Purcell tune lets tread to? | See; it does this: keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are; | what good means - where a
glance
Master more may than gaze, | gaze out of countenance.
Those lovely lads once, wet-fresh | windfalls of war's storm,
How then should Gregory, a father, | have gleaned else from
swarm-
ed Rome? But God to a nation | dealt that day's dear chance.
To man, that needs would worship | block or barren stone,
Our law says: Love what are | love's worthiest, were all known;
World's loveliest - men's selves. Self | flashes off frame and
face.
What do then? how meet beauty? | Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; | then leave, let that alone.
Yea, wish that though, wish all, | God's better beauty, grace.

Marks from MS B and CRWD. pp. 129-130.

(Carrion Comfort)

NOT, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist - slack they may be - these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry I can no more. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me?
scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruisèd bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid
thee and flee?
Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would
laugh, cheer.
Cheer whom though? The hero whose heaven-handling flung
me, foot trod
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?
That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!)
my God.

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief-
woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing -
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No ling-
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief'.
O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

Marks from MS H

Tom's Garland:

upon the unemployed

TOM - garlanded with squat and surly steel
Tom; then Tom's fallowbootfellow piles pick
By him and rips out rockfire homeforth - sturdy Dick;
Tom Heart-at-ease, Tom Navvy: he is all for his meal
Sure, 's bed now. Low be it: lustily he his low lot (feel
That ne'er need hunger, Tom; Tom seldom sick,
Seldomer heartsore; that treads through, prickproof, thick
Thousands of thorns, thoughts) swings through. Commonweal
Little I reck ho! lacklevel in, if all had bread:
What! Country is honour enough in all us - lordly head,
With heaven's lights high hung round, or, mother-ground
That mammocks, mighty foot. But no way sped,
Nor mind nor mainstrength; gold go garlanded
With, perilous, O no; nor yet plod safe shod sound;
Undenizened, beyond bound
Of earth's glory, earth's ease, all; no one, nowhere,
In wide the world's weal; rare gold, bold steel, bare
In both; care, but share care -
This, by Despair, bred Hangdog dull; by Rage,
Manwolf, worse; and their packs infest the age.

The mark V replaces \\ , which Hopkins said indicated "stresses of sense, independent of the natural stress of the verse". (Poems, p. 290).

Harry Ploughman

HARD as hurdle arms, with a broth of goldish flue
Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped flank; lank
Rope-over thigh; knee-nave; and barrelled shank -
Head and foot, shoulder and shank -
By a grey eye's heed steered well, one crew, fall to;
Stand at stress. Each limb's barrowy brawn, his thew
That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank -
Soared or sank - ,
Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a rollcall, rank
And features, in flesh, what deed he each must do -
His sinew-service where do.

He leans to it, Harry bends, look. Back, elbow, and liquid waist
In him, all quail to the wallowing o' the plough. 'S cheek crimsons; curls
Wag or crossbridle, in a wind lifted, windlaced -
See his wind- lilylocks -laced;
Churlsgrace too, child of Amansstrength, how it hangs or hurls
Them - broad in bluff hide his frowning feet lashed! raced
With, along them, cragiron under and cold furls -
With-a-fountain's shining-shot furls.

shoulder — bends, look — crimsons
Soared or sank — quail — Churlsgrace, too,

All from MS A — (Bracketed marks from MS A)

That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection

CLOUD-PUFFBALL, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt forth, then chevy on an air-

built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs | they throng; they glitter in marches.

Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, | wherever an elm arches,

Shivelights and shadowtackle in long | lashes lace, lance, and pair.

Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare

Of yestertempest's creases; | in pool and rutpeel parches

Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches

Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there

Footfretted in it. Million-fuelled, | nature's bonfire burns on.

But quench her bonniest, dearest | to her, her clearest-selved spark

Man, how fast his firedint, | his mark on mind, is gone!

Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark

Drowned. O pity and indig | nation! Manshape, that shone

Sheer off, disseveral, a star, | death blots black out; nor mark

Is any of him at all so stark

But vastness blurs and time | beats level. Enough! the Resur-rection,

A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, | joyless days, dejection.

Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. | Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; | world's wildfire, leave but ash:
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, | since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, | patch, matchwood, immortal
diamond.
Is immortal diamond.

Justus quidem tu es, Domine, si disputem tecum; verumtamen
Justa loquar ad te: Quare via impiorum prosperatur? &c.

THOU art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,

Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes

Them; birds build - but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

Appendix C

Excerpts from the letter from GMH to Everard Hopkins Nov. 5 1885.

To touch on the Eurydice etc again. The run-over rhymes were experimental, perhaps a mistake; I do not know that I shd. repeat them. But rhyme, you understand, is like an indelible process: you cannot paint over it. Surely they can be recited but the effect must have been prepared, as many things must. I can only remember one, the rhyme to electric: it must be read 'startingly and rash'. It is 'an effect'.

I am sweetly soothed by your saying that you cd. make any one understand my poem by reciting it well. That is what I always hoped, thought, and said; it is my precise aim. And there hangs so considerable a tale, in fact the very thing I was going to write about Sprung Rhythm in general (by the bye rhythm, not metre; metre is a matter of arranging lines, rhythm is one of arranging feet; anapaests are a rhythm, the sonnet is a metre; and so you can write any metre in any rhythm and any rhythm to any metre - supposing of course that usage has not tied the rhythm to the metre, as often or mostly it has), that I must for the present leave off, give o'er, as they say in Lancashire.

Every art then and every work of art has its own play or performance. The play or performance of a stage-play is the playing it on the boards, the stage: reading it, much more writing it, is not its performance. The performance of a symphony is not the scoring it however elaborately; it is in the concern room, by the orchestra, and then and there only. A picture is performed, or performs, when anyone looks at it in the proper and intended light. A house performs when it is now built and lived in. To come nearer: books play, perform, or are played and performed when they are read; and ordinarily by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. Now we are getting to it, George. Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting; a record was kept

of it; the record could be, was, read, and that in time by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. This reacted on the art: what was to be performed under these conditions, for these conditions ought to be and was composed and calculated. Sound-effects were intended, wonderful combinations even; but they bear the marks of having been meant for the whispered, not even whispered, merely mental performance of the closet, the study and so on. You follow, Edward Joseph? You do: then we are there. This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance; it must be spoken; till it is spoken it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself. Sprung rhythm gives back to poetry its true soul and self. As poetry is emphatically speech, speech purged of dross like gold in the furnace, so it must have emphatically the essential elements of speech. Now emphasis itself, stress, is one of these: sprung rhythm makes verse stressy; it purges it to an emphasis as much brighter, livelier, more lustrous than the regular but commonplace emphasis of common rhythm as poetry in general is brighter than common speech. But this it does by a return from that regular emphasis towards, not up to the more picturesque irregular emphasis of talk - without however becoming itself lawlessly irregular; then it could not be art; but making up by regularity, equality, of a larger unit (the foot merely) for equality in the less, the syllable. There it wd. be necessary to come down to mathematics and technicalities which time does not allow of, so I forbear. For I believe you now understand. Perform the Eurydice, then see. I must however add that to perform it quite satisfactorily is not at all easy. I do not say I could do it; but this is nothing against the truth of the principle maintained. A composer need not be able to play his violin music or sing his songs. Indeed the higher wrought the art, clearly the wider severance between the parts of the author and the

performer.

Neither of course do I mean my verse to be recited only. True poetry must be studied. As Shakespeare and all great dramatists have their maximum effect on the stage but bear to be or must be studied at home before or after or both, so I should wish it to be with my lyric poetry. And in practice that will be enough by itself alone to any one who has first realised the effect of reciting; for then, like a musician reading a score and supplying in thought the orchestra (as they can), no further performance is, substantially, needed. But you say you have not so realised it - or perhaps you have. Mr. Patmore never admired the Eurydice or any of my things, except some in common rhythm, for just this reason (I hope - and he himself suggested).

Much the same is the case with plain chant music. Many of those who do not admire it have never heard it performed (or, worse, have heard it murdered) and cannot conceive the performance- for to read and even play it, without the secret, is no good.

On the other hand there is verse, very good of its rhetorical kind (for that is what it is, rhetoric in verse), such as Macaulay's Lays. Aytoun's ditto, and ever so much that the Irish produce, flowing, stirring, and pointed, which recited seems first rate but studied at leisure, by the daylight, does not indeed turn out worthless but loses the name of genuine poetry.

* * *

By the bye, as prose, though commonly less beautiful than verse and debarred from its symmetrical beauties, has, at least possible to it, effects more beautiful than any verse can attain, so perhaps the inflections and intonations of the speaking voice may give effects more beautiful than any attainable by the fixed pitches of music. I look on this as an infinite field & very little worked. It has this great diffi-

culty, that the art depends entirely on living tradition. The phonograph may give us one, but hitherto there could be no record of fine spoken utterance.

In drama the fine spoken utterance has been cultivated and a tradition established, but everything is most highly wrought and furthest developed where it is cultivated by itself; fine utterance then will not be best developed in the drama, where gesture and action generally are to play a great part too: it must be developed in recited lyric. Now hitherto this has not been done. The Greeks carried lyric to its highest perfection in Pindar and the tragic choruses, but what was this lyric? not a spoken lyric at all, but song; poetry written neither to be recited nor chanted even nor even sung to a transferable tune but each piece of itself a song. The same remark then as above recurs: the natural performance and delivery belonging properly to lyric poetry, which is speech, has not been enough cultivated, and should be. When performers were trained to do it (it needed the rarest gifts) and audiences to appreciate it it would be, I am persuaded, a lovely art. Incalculable effect could be produced by the delivery of Wordsworth's Margaret ('Where art thou, my beloved son? - do you know it?). With the aid of the phonograph each phrase could be fixed and learnt by heart like a song.

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